

Student Politics and Quality of Education: An Exploratory Study on Dhaka University

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Abstract

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This study attempted to explore the influence of student political activities of Dhaka University on quality of education. The study covered the political activities of two major student organizations of Dhaka University. Those are Jatiotabadi Chattra Dal (JCD) and Bangladesh Chattra League (BCL). By law, the student organizations of Bangladesh are linked with political parties. Hence, JCD is linked with Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) while BCL is linked with Bangladesh Awami League (BAL). None but these two parties have earned the opportunity to form the governments of Bangladesh. Adopting a qualitative research approach, data for this study have been collected through interview, observation and focus group discussion. Secondary data have also been collected from different books, articles and newspapers.

The students claimed that though the students of Bangladesh had contributed to a large extent in different national movements, the present political activities of the party-linked student organizations were organized in support of the political parties. A big distrust found between JCD and BCL leaders. Leaders of both the organizations claimed against each other and urged their own role as correct. However, it has found that Dhaka University faces unscheduled closing for the political violence between the student organisations. Many have died because of the clash between the student organizations of Dhaka University. Even during the normal days, the teaching-learning environment of Dhaka University is disturbed by various political programmes. The students and teachers expressed their unhappiness for such political activities. The respondents claimed that the student leaders were appointed as teachers of Dhaka University with the help of political influence. The politically appointed teachers also influence the quality of education towards a negative direction. The tenants of the dormitories are disturbed by the political leaders of the dormitories in many ways. This is a big influence of student political activities on education of Dhaka University.

However, this study explored that the party-linked student political activities are in process in Dhaka University. These activities are in process sacrificing the quality of education of the university. The university authority and leaders of political parties should take the issue of present student political activities of Dhaka University as important. Further study can be conducted to find out the necessary steps that have to be taken in this regard.

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1 Chapter One: Introduction and Contextualisation

1.1 Introduction

Student political activism is highly complex and many faceted. It is very difficult to explain and even more problematic to predict. It is not surprising that there is no overarching theoretical explanation for it. Yet understanding the configurations of student politics is important. Political leaders would do well not only to listen to student protest movements but also to understand their dynamics, since regimes have been threatened or even toppled by such protests. The academic community also needs to understand student activism because students have been key actors in movements for university reform and have also disrupted academic institutions (Altbach 1989: 1).

Students, specially students of higher education are well aware of not only their own rights and claims but also claim the interest of their countries. Being inspired by nationalism, students have taken part in liberation wars against the colonial powers in many countries, and at the same time students have mobilized for academic issues. This study attempted to explore the influence of student politics of Dhaka University on quality of education. Though there are many student organizations in Dhaka University, two organizations are bigger than others. Those are Jatiotabadi Chattra Dal (JCD) and Bangladesh Chattra League (BCL). By law, the political parties of Bangladesh have their student wings (Siddiqui 1997). Hence, JCD is the student wing of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) while BCL is associated with Bangladesh Awami League (AL). None but these two parties (BNP and AL) have experience to form the government of Bangladesh. So both BCL and JCD experienced the government patronage. My study aimed to discuss how the political activities of JCD and BCL influence the indicators of quality of education of Dhaka University. I have meant student politics as the politics of JCD and BCL in this study. In this introductory chapter I want to discuss the adopted definition of student politics and of the quality of education of Dhaka University.

Altbach (1984) has stated that there were differences between the natures of student politics of countries of South and that of the countries of North. Taking this view in to

account, a brief outline of Bangladesh emphasizing on its geography, people, socio-economic situation, political and educational background might be helpful to the reader to grasp the student political culture.

1.2 Bangladesh

Bangladesh is a small and densely populated South Asian country located on the Bay of Bengal, bordered by India and Myanmar. During colonial period, this part of India was under British rule, it became the eastern wing of the then Pakistan in 1947, which emerged as an independent country in 1971. The country has only 145,570 square kilometres of land and 129 millions of population (BBS 2001). Although there are people with different religious beliefs the Muslims counted for about 89.7 percent (BBS 2003). Various types of ethnic minorities are there in the country, some of which have their own languages, however the national language Bangla is spoken by over 98 percent of the people. A quarter of all population lives in urban areas (BBS 2001). It is one of the rare countries where male population is more than female population. Life expectancy at birth is only 62.5 years (WHO 2005).

The general socio-economic situation of the country is not much satisfactory. However, in some sectors it improved a lot since independence. Pervasive poverty, rural-based economy, high levels of unemployment, much illiteracy, high degree of urban-rural gap and relatively low status of females are some characteristics of the country. International economic classification placed the country in the lowest category with per capita income of US\$ 360 (UNICEF 2004). According to Human Development Index (HDI), Bangladesh ranks 145th among 173 countries in the globe and according to Human Poverty Index (HPI) it ranks 73rd among 90 countries (UNDP 2005). About 40% of the total population lie under poverty line and the adult literacy rate is only 41.6% with greater differences between urban and rural population and males and females.

Bangladesh has a flourishing non-governmental organisation (NGO) community with some of the most vibrant, successful and innovative organisations in the world. Bangladesh is committed, with the international community, to attain developmental goals and targets fixed in various global conferences. The country has participated in the

World Conference on Education for All held in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990 and in the Global Education Forum in Dakar in 2000.

The Bangladesh educational system may broadly be divided into three stages, these are primary, secondary and tertiary. The secondary education can also be divided into three sub-stages viz., junior secondary, secondary and higher secondary. Besides the general educational system, traditional system of education based on religious believes of the population is also there. The National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) formulates curriculum for primary to higher secondary levels and the universities are independent to formulate their own curriculum. Separate education boards are there to formulate the curriculum for respective sub-system. Bangla is the medium of instructions at all levels of education. However, English is widely used at the tertiary level especially in the universities.

Though there are many political parties in Bangladesh, the Bangladesh's political system is dominated by two heritage parties, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and the Awami League (AL). Both the parties are bitter rivals and engaged with undercutting one another (Riaz 2004). There exists big distrust among the political parties of Bangladesh, mainly between BNP and AL. Parliament election is organised under a non-political *Care Taker Government*¹. If BNP gets more seats in the parliament election, AL claims that the election was unfair. BNP claims the same when AL wins in the election. Instead of helping the government, the main opposition party (either BNP or AL) promises to topple the government from the very early days of starting the government. Besides, government doesn't provide wide scope to the opposition parties to participate in governmental activities. In such a situation, the opposition parties engage themselves in practices that are inconsistent with democratic principles and practices, such as calling economically weakening national strikes, violent street politics, and any other means to destabilize the government (Riaz 2004). None of the parties is elected continuously two times and this indicates that neither BNP nor AL can satisfy the people continuously. After toppling the

¹ In Bangladesh, at the end of the duration of a political government, Care Taker Government is formed by non-political representatives to organize a free, fair, credible and unbiased parliament election.

military government in 1990, BNP was elected in the general election of 1991. In 1996, elected through general election, AL formed the government. However, BNP returned to the power again in 2001.

At present, the non-political Care Taker Government is in power and the government is planning to ban *political party-linked student politics* and *political party-linked teacher politics*² from the campuses of all educational institutions of Bangladesh. According to the plan of the Care Taker Government, the students and teachers will be free to join in any political parties and there is no problem in it. However, the students and teachers will not be allowed to form any organization in the universities as a wing of political parties. The students will have the right to agitate for their academic issues or for national issues, if necessary. However, the party activities will not be allowed at the campuses (The Daily Star, 05-04-2007). Hot discussion has been started supporting as well as protesting the decision. The people of Bangladesh have a soft corner to the students for their role in different national movements against the British and Pakistani rulers during pre-independence period. From that point of view, a brief discussion about the role of students in different national movements is presented before entering the discussion about present day student politics of Dhaka University.

1.3 Student politics of Bangladesh: During the British Colonial Period

Though student politics for many nations is a comparatively recent phenomenon beginning with the nineteen sixties, the students of Bangladesh had a rich history of student activism as part of the nationalist movement. The students of this part of India started to move against the British Regime. The primary nationalist movement of India provided a similarity of political identity to the Indian Youth in general and student youth in particular (Mohanty 2006). India became under the British Regime in 1757 and achieved independence in 1947. For about 200 years, the peoples of India struggled for Independence. Students were an important part of independence struggle of India. In

² Like the students of Dhaka University, some of the teachers are also politicized. The teachers have different groups like Nil Dal (Blue Panel), Shada Dal (White Panel) etc. Different elections are held among the teachers to elect VC, Deans, Senate members and other representatives. The teachers qualify in these elections as the member of a Panel. The teacher politics and student politics is closely related with each other. In some cases, the teachers work as the advisor of student organizations.

some cases, the students were the pioneers. Besides the independence struggle, the students were associated with various Social Reform Movements (Jayaram 1989).

The Occupying British played many tactical games to stop the Independence Movement of India (Mohanty 2006). The partition of Bengal in 1905 may be treated as a land mark in the history of student political activism in India in the twentieth century.

Students of different parts of India formed their own regional student organizations – Pakistani Student Association, Bengali Student Association, Indian Student Association etc. However all the regional and religion-based student organization developed All India Students' Federation in 1936 (Hannan 2000). After establishing Dhaka University in 1921, the students of Bengal became more active in the Anti-British Movement. The political leaders of different parties were also united in question of Independence. The national leaders and students demanded the *Quit India Movement* against the British in 1940. The British took part in the World War II and after the war they were bound to quit from India as the student-mass movement reached to a highest momentum (Mohanty 2006; Jayaram 1989).

As a result of long-standing movement for about two hundred years, against British Regime, The British left India in 1947 and two separate and independent countries – India and Pakistan emerged in the world map. Bengal was also divided at that time, the East Bengal became the eastern wing of Pakistan and named *East Pakistan*.

1.4 Student politics of Bangladesh: During the Pakistani Regime

Short after forming the State of Pakistan, the people of East Pakistan realized that they need their own country and government. At that moment, the Pakistani government tried to change the language of the people of East Pakistan. Instead of Bangla, they tried to establish Urdu as the unique state language of the entire Pakistan. However, in verge of strong student-mass movement, the Pakistani rulers failed to succeed their language plan and were bound to recognize Bangla as one of the two state languages of Pakistan (Hannan 2000). The Language Movement was planned and operated mainly by the students of Dhaka University. Some four students were killed by policemen on 21st

February 1952, as they brought a rally denying the curfew called by the government. This incident emerged a strong student-mass movement against the language decision of the Government. The government became bound to bow its head down to the demonstrators and acknowledged Bangla as one of the state languages of Pakistan. This was one of the prominent movements in the history of language movement all over the world. The UNESCO has declared 21st February as the *International Mother Language Day*. The contribution of students in Language Movement is one of the major contributions in the history of student politics of Bangladesh (Hannan 2000).

After the Language movement, the East Pakistanis were taking preparation for independence. During the decade of 1960, students in the campus fought for the rights of themselves and of the people of the country, debated ideas and formed social networks that were to create the middle class civil society of the nation state of Bangladesh (Kabir 2002).

On March 2, 1971, the student leaders of Dhaka University flew the flag of Bangladesh for the first time and this caused a positive influence over the people for gaining freedom (Hannan 2000). The students not only tried to make the people aware about the importance of independence, they took part in the liberation war. Hundreds of thousands of students of Bangladesh took part in the independence war in 1971 and many of them sacrificed their lives for the independence of the country. The Pakistani Army killed many students of Dhaka University at the very beginning day of the liberation war on March 25, 1971. This explored how the Pakistani government was annoyed by the student community of Bangladesh. In respect of the student movement, it can be said that the independent Bangladesh is largely owed to the students of Bangladesh (Hannan 2000).

1.5 Dhaka University and student politics of Bangladesh

There were many causes behind establishing the Dhaka University during the British regime, in 1921 (Hannan 2000). As the result of continuous movement by the leaders of East Bengal, the university was established. During the British regime in India, the ruling power followed nasty 'divide and dominate' rule in East Bengal (Hannan 2000). They provided more opportunities to the Hindus than the Muslims. The Hindus were the major

beneficiaries of the educational system introduced by the British. So the Muslims lag far behind the Hindus in all the components of development (Hannan 2000). Realizing their backwardness in education, the Muslim leaders were dissatisfied with the British policy and started movement for their equal opportunity in education and other areas of development. The Muslim Leaders demanded establishment of a university in Dhaka, specially for the disadvantaged Muslims of East Bengal. In spite of the protest by the Indian leaders, the British authority agreed to establish a university in Dhaka. After passing a long way of demand, the university was established in 1921. This was the first university in Bangladesh.

Holding the hopes and dreams of the people, the students of Dhaka University tried to contribute to the nation from the beginning. During the British regime, the students of Dhaka University moved against the British together with the students of other parts of India (Hannan 2000). The students of Dhaka University played significant role against the Pakistani Regime also. In course of the Independence movement, even the national leaders were dependent on the student leaders of Dhaka University (Sayeed 2005). Throughout the decade of 1960, the students of Dhaka University were in the street for different movements against the Pakistani rulers. One very unique characteristic of pre-independence student politics of Bangladesh was the involvement of brilliant and dedicated students in politics (Kabir 2002). To state the status of student politicians of Dhaka University, Kabir (2002) stated,

At that time the student community was more focused in its search for knowledge. Students realised that they carried the hopes and investment of their families. However, this pursuit of knowledge was not divorced from an awareness of their social responsibilities. Hence, the students of Dhaka University were actively involved in democratic politics. The students of the University had already played a historic role in the Language Movement in the 1950s and in the 1960s were at the vanguard of the struggle against the Pakistani military junta of Field Marshall Ayub Khan in 1962, 1964 and 1969 (Kabir 2002:1).

However, being the oldest and largest university of Bangladesh, the students of Dhaka University played the leading role in all the student movements during the British and Pakistani Regime.

1.6 Student politics in Dhaka University: post-independence period

Returning from the battle field, the students joined in their educational institutions. Independence created a tremendous hope among the people as well as among the students. The students were demanding frequent change and development of the country. Though Bangladesh gained its independence from Pakistan, the students continued the movement with different national, international as well as academic issues. However, the noticeable event was clashes between the different groups in one hand, and the internal conflict inside the groups on another (Hannan 2000).

1.6.1 Student movement regarding academic issues

During the liberation war, some examinations were held by the Pakistan-supported teachers and officers. The students demanded the cancellation of all the examinations held during the war of independence. *The First Education Commission of Bangladesh* was formed by the then president to formulate a guideline for the country's education which is widely known as "Kudrat-E-Khuda Commission". The students demanded to include a student representative to the Education Commission. Though there was no student representative in the commission, the government assured to reflect the hope of the students in the report. Considering the needs of the students, the commission successfully reflected the demands of the students (Hannan 2000).

1.6.2 Conflict among the students

Besides these types of movements, some unexpected events happened to the students. Conflict created in Bangladesh Chattra League (BCL), the leading student organization from the 1950s. BCL divided into two groups and clash was a normal event between the groups. The relationship between the government and the student organizations became weak as two students died by the bullet of the policemen on January 1, 1973 while they were in demonstration in front of the US Embassy to stop bombing in Vietnam. In the independent Bangladesh, the students began to take stance against government for the first time. In the same year, four students were killed at the Dhaka University campus by

the policemen. As a result of this incident, all the student organizations burst into fire against the government (Hannan 2000). In a newly independent country, the government needed a stable situation to build up the country. Instead, the situation was going from bad to worse day by day. The students were out of classroom for different occasions which deteriorated the quality of their education. The internal clash between different groups also caused a great harm to the image of student politics. Seven students of BCL were killed in April 4, 1974 by the other group of BCL. This was the first event of killing students by other students. Hannan (2000) found ‘the internal clash of BCL’ behind this event of killing.

The situation of newly independent Bangladesh was in a crisis and the then president Sheikh Muzibur Rahman was unable to control the situation. Besides, he tried to ban multi-party political culture and tried to introduce single-party politics. The state decision of controlling over the newspapers and other mass media was also criticized. There appeared a famine at that time and the people were in a difficult situation. On August 15, 1975 Sheikh Muzibur Rahman was killed along with his family members by some of the rebel army officers.

1.6.3 Student politics became the part of national politics

The *Political Party Ordinance* was introduced in Bangladesh in 1976 during the Regime of Ziaur Rahman, under which the political parties were required to create their ‘student fronts’ (Sayeed 1994). This created an open opportunity to link the student organizations with the political parties. Declaring himself as the President, Major General Ziaur Rahman, the then chief of the Army, took charge of the country in 1977. He introduced his political party named ‘Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)’ and the student front of BNP was named ‘Jatiotabadi Chattra Dal (JCD)’. Though BCL was in support of Bangladesh Awami League, BCL was not the student wing of Awami League. After introducing the Political Party Ordinance, BCL became the student wing of Awami League. Introducing the Political Party Ordinance, Major General Ziaur Rahman played a very important role to make student politics directly linked with the national politics (Siddiqui 1997). For Siddiqui (1997),

.....student politics on the campus was raised from its earlier linkage with the university to a new linkage with national politics, which meant that it had cut adrift from its moorings, holding it fast to the university. This was a sweeping change, and no amount of objections from the university would hold the president back. What prompted him to introduce this new style of student politics in complete disregard to opposition of the university men, is not clear. If it was 'transparency' in student politics he aimed at, he got more than what he had wanted (Siddiqui 1997: 108-109).

Many have complained that during the regime of Ziaur Rahman, campus violence received state support to make the power stable for the ruling party (Siddiqui 1997). Being a military officer, Ziaur Rahman received the support of the people of Bangladesh as he introduced multi-party political culture and tried to influence the people towards a way of development. He was elected the president of Bangladesh in 1978 through a general election. In 1979, the Parliament election was held and BNP formed a democratic government.

1.6.4 Student movement for democracy in Bangladesh

President Ziaur Rahman was killed by the coup of some army officers in 1981. In 1982, General Ershad, the then Chief of Army, declared himself as the president of Bangladesh. He also introduced a political party, Jatiyo Party (National Party), and student front was also formed in name 'Jatio Chattra Somaj' (National Student Society). Ershad did not get the support of the people of Bangladesh as he introduced military government rather than democracy. During the Ershad regime, different student organizations of Dhaka University developed a "Combined Student Front" against Ershad. The Combined Student Front turned out the Ershad-supported student organisation from Dhaka University. The student organizations of other educational institutions followed the student organizations of Dhaka University and became together against Ershad government. At that situation, Ershad tried to ban student politics from the campuses of educational institutions of Bangladesh (Hannan 2000) but the plan was failed. In 1990, in verge of a massive mass-student movement, Ershad regime

toppled. Siddiqui (1997) considered this as the only one meaningful contribution by student politics in post-independent Bangladesh.

1.7 Student politics of Dhaka University: During the Democratic Age

From the year of independence (1971) to 1990, Bangladesh suffered post-independence disorders and the military regimes. As a result, being independent, they student couldn't enjoy a normal situation. After toppling the Military regime of Ershad in 1990, everyone hoped that the students would be more careful with their studies and the campus situation would be quite and calm. Unfortunately, that did not happen as the student organizations became closer to their mother parties. In support of their mother parties, one organization took the opposition stand against another organisation that caused an instable situation at the campuses of higher educational institutions. Being the largest and most influential university of Bangladesh, Dhaka University was the main target of the political parties. The student organisations of Dhaka University were involved themselves to implement the political agendas of their mother parties. The student organizations were also helped by the political parties with money, machines and muscles (Sayeed 2005, Hannan 2000). Sayeed (2005) addressed the student organizations as the private armies of the political parties in Bangladesh. JCD and BCL are the two largest student organizations of Dhaka University which received government support. The political activities of Dhaka University mainly rotated by these two organizations.

1.7.1 Student politics of Dhaka University: During BNP Regime (1991-1996)

After toppling the Ershad Regime, general election was held in Bangladesh in 1991. Being elected in that election Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) took the power. The BNP government enjoyed the power from 1991 to 1996. During these five years, JCD became the partner of the government (Hannan 2000). The JCD leaders enjoyed the power of government as they wanted to enjoy that. Using this power, they captured the control of the Dhaka University campus and the other student organizations were near to out of the campus. By taking control over the campus, the student organizations achieve many benefits. Siddiqui (1997) stated,

Often activists of a particular group, usually the group linked with the ruling party, operate as a pressure group, to gain some advantage from the administration. As a rule, they expect a share of the gain from contractors working on some building project. They often justify this by saying that they ‘managed’ the contract in favour of the contractor, so it is to them that the contractor owes his contract (Siddiqui 1997: 109).

During the BNP regime, JCD captured most of the student dormitories. In Dhaka University, there are seventeen dormitories for students. The male and female students live in separate dormitories. Of the seventeen dormitories four are for female students and thirteen are for male students. Though student political activities are not so active in female dormitories like the male dormitories, the female activists of JCD took control over the female dormitories. *Control over the dormitories* provided many facilities to them. They could stay at the halls even with their non-student friends who usually work as Mustans. They hall leaders also received extortion for the nearby business communities (Siddiqui 1997). Besides these types of facilities, the student group of ruling party worked as a pressure group and adopted many devious ways to secure admission of their fellows who would otherwise fail to secure admission tests (Siddiqui 1997). As JCD alone received the facilities from the campus with the help of the government, BCL felt them deprived. Hence, BCL tried to take the control over the campus and at the same time, JCD tried to take full control over the campus.

Clash between the different groups happened in one hand and internal clash of groups of the same organisation also occurred on another. This caused death of many student leaders and activists of Dhaka University. Some non-political students also died because of the cross-fire between the rivalry groups. Through this period, the BCL tried to initiate anti-government movement with the support of AL and other parties. The university faced unscheduled closing due to the clash between the student organizations. Ahmad (2000) recorded about 300 incidents of political violence at the Dhaka University campus caused the death of 17 student leaders and activists and the university was closed for 43 days during the BNP Regime (from 1991 to 1996).

1.7.2 Student politics of Dhaka University: During AL Regime (1996-2001)

Awami League took the power of Bangladesh through winning the general election of 1996. The same culture of student politics appeared in Dhaka University during the AL regime (Hannan 2000). The only change was the people but the political culture and nature were almost unchanged. During the AL regime, BCL took the control over Dhaka University campus and they captured all the male student halls. The same role that BCL played during the BNP regime, JCD played during the AL regime. The campus faced the same instable situation (Hannan 2000). The death by political violence, incidents of political violence and closing by political incidents caused to destroy the congenial teaching-learning atmosphere of the university was almost same in the AL Regime like the previous one. (Sayeed 2005). Ahmad (2000) provided the data of first three years of AL Regime which explored that during this time 176 incidents of political violence took place at the university which caused the death of 2 students and the university remained closed for 29 days. To say about the relationship between political parties (BNP and AL) and their student wings, Hannan (2000) said,

The status of the student organizations depend on the status of their mother parties. If BNP enjoys the power, JCD, the student wing of BNP enjoys the control over the Dhaka University. The same thing happens for BCL, the student wing of AL when AL enjoys power (Hannan 2000).

1.7.3 Student politics of Dhaka University in another BNP Regime (2001-2006)

BNP returned to power of Bangladesh through the general election of 2001. Here is an important observation. Neither BNP nor AL satisfy the people with their activities and the power wheel is moving after every 5 years from BNP to AL and from AL to BNP. Similar student politics took place in 2001 and JCD regained its lost place and BCL took the stand of opposition group. During this period, JCD took full control over the campus and they captured all the male dormitories. One important characteristics of this period was the decrease of political violence at the campus.

An educational researcher told that the extent of political violence and political killing decreased in the second term of BNP regime. He said,

As JCD introduced almost absolute mastery at the Dhaka University campus with the government support, the opposite groups have become weaker and almost absent. As a result, the extent of clashes has decreased (Interview, Educational Researcher, 21-10-2006).

From the above statement, it can be found that co-existence of BCL and JC caused violence at the Dhaka University campus. The Vice Chancellor of Dhaka University also told that the extent of political violence has decreased (Interview, Vice Chancellor, 16-11-2006). He thought that the tendency of general students towards student politics was changing to a negative way. This might cause the decrease of political violence during the second term of BNP Regime. However, the campus situation deteriorated at the final year of BNP (2006), when the problem created regarding the formation of the Care Taker Government to organize a neutral and free election. The AL claimed that BNP was trying to establish a BNP-supported Care Taker Government but BNP rejected the claim. Both the groups were strict in their stance. This national political issue influenced the political situation of Dhaka University to a large extent. JCD was organizing rallies and meetings almost everyday on campus. I joined a meeting of JCD. The JCD leaders were threatening the AL leaders with a harsh voice in support of BNP. A JCD leader told that the JCD members would sacrifice even their lives to establish a BNP government in Bangladesh. Clash took place on campus between JCD and BCL. BCL called continuous strike at the university demanding co-existence of all the student organizations at the campus with a congenial teaching-learning situation. I was collecting data at that time. The university remained closed for about two months continuously. The political situation caused a serious stagnation in Bangladesh. The BNP-supported Care Taker Government was taking preparation for the election but the other political parties rejected the election. When the political situation reached to an intolerable stage, the New Care Taker Government supported by the Army took the power of Bangladesh on 11th January, 2007 and emergency was called throughout the country. Dhaka University returned to its normal academic life after two months.

In the above section, I tried to present a brief outline of student politics of Bangladesh before and after independence. Before independence, the students moved against the occupying rulers who were not Bangladeshis. A common national interest was behind the movements of that time. However, in the independent Bangladesh, the student organisations are chasing each other.

The two leading student organizations – JCD and BCL- are leading the student political activities of Dhaka University now. The political activities of these two organizations are influencing the quality of Dhaka University's education (Ahmad 2000). How these two organizations are influencing the quality of education is the main focus of my study. In the below section, I will discuss the adopted indicators of quality of education for my study.

1.8 Quality of education

In the literature, various methods have evolved of defining or categorizing quality. Of those methods, one particular approach that has gained prominence is referred to as '*The stakeholder approach*' (Watty 2006). According to this approach, the potential for a number of different perspectives of quality to be defined in the higher educational environment. It claims that, these perspectives reflect the views of a variety of stakeholders who have legitimate authority to state their perspectives (Middlehurst 1992; Vroeijerstijn 1990). Vroeijerstijn (1995) commented that any definition of quality must take the views of different stakeholders into account and quality will be seen in the eyes of the beholder. In defining quality, Harvey & Green (1993) commented,

This is not a different perspective on the same thing but different perspectives on different things with the same label (Harvey & Green 1993: 10).

There is a long debate about the definition of quality. According to UNESCO (2003),

Quality is a complex, dynamic, historically constructed and multifaceted concept, often defined by what is lacking rather than by

its contents. It reflects national, regional and global socio-economic, cultural and political visions (UNESCO 2003: 2).

Quality can be viewed as: exceptional, perfection (or consistency), fitness for purpose, value for money or transformation (Harvey & Green 1993).

In addressing quality of education, Ahmed et al., (2003) lamented,

Quality in educational programmes is best reflected in the learning achievement of the students. It is the outcome of combined effects of a host of factors. These include inherent soundness of programme designs, adequacy of resources, consistent with objectives, internal operations and management of programmes, circumstances that affect learners' ability to participate in learning effectively, and how quality indicators are defined and assessed (Ahmed et al., 2003: 2).

Accepting the difficulty of grasping the meaning of quality, it is expected that, in a particular society, institutions of higher education must strive to achieve and sustain the highest possible standards (UNESCO 2003). Generally higher education tends to identify and meet the societal needs, try to discover their strengths, weaknesses and opportunities.

Though we use *quality* as a degree of excellence, or an attribute, or better than something else, approaches to quality of higher education have varied widely based on the context in which higher education is taking place. Although a generally accepted definition of quality in higher education has not emerged, the following concept is widely used.

All the policies, systems, and processes directed to ensuring the maintenance and enhancement of the quality of educational provision within an institution. A quality assurance system is the means by which an institution confirms to itself and to others that conditions are in place for students to achieve the standards that the institution has set (UNESCO 2003: 5).

1.8.1 Quality assurance mechanisms

Different countries have established its own mechanism to ensure quality in higher education. Countries like Norway has set up a national agency called the Norwegian National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT) to assure quality in Norwegian Higher Education (Lycke 2004). Norway also enjoys the political commitment of the government to ensure the quality of higher education. According to the Norwegian Network Council (1999),

The establishment of the Norwegian Network Council in 1998 signalled an increased political interest and a far more active stand for quality work from politicians and the Ministry. A new law for higher education, increased institutional autonomy, organisational changes, new demands on educational content and increase in student numbers, all contributed to a stronger focus on the qualitative aspects of the educational programmes (Norwegian Network Council 1999; Cited in Lycke 2004).

In many cases, some countries set same standard of quality for higher education and try to assure that standard together. Under *the Bologna Declaration*, the OECD countries have set common standard of higher education in 1999 (Martin 2006). Intended to increase the employability, mobility, transparency and comparability by 2010, the OECD countries have created the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). EHEA is working towards ensuring quality in higher education in OECD countries (Martin 2006). So it can be seen that different countries followed different mechanism to assure quality in higher education.

1.8.2 Indicators of quality of higher education

The above concept refers that the quality must be based on the particular society and institution. Different parameters are used in evaluating the quality of education in higher education. In its document, UNESCO (2003) has pointed some parameters for assessing the quality of higher education like,

- i) Student/staff ratios,
- ii) Capacity of lecture rooms,
- iii) Laboratories,
- iv) Academic and pedagogical competence of teaching staff,

- v) Capacity to meet social demands and needs, ethical/moral aspects, degree of students' satisfaction,
- vi) Contribution to cultural and civic development, working and employment conditions of staff and academic mobility etc (UNESCO 2003: 9).

To study about the quality of education of two universities of Bangladesh, Ahmad (2000), a researcher from Bangladesh, has determined the below indicators,

- i) Students' performance,
- ii) Time-lag between the dates of examinations and those of the publication of results,
- iii) Gap between the total class hours devoted to lessons during an academic session and the hours scheduled to be spent for the lessons,
- iv) Teachers' attendance,
- v) Qualification of the teachers,
- vi) Teacher-student ratios,
- vii) Course contents etc. (2000: 28).

The indicators of quality depend on the particular society. One can easily understand that, the indicators to study on Bangladeshi Universities emphasise mostly on time period rather than research capacity because, Bangladeshi Universities face a great problem of smooth operation of the academic activities of the universities. Umar (2001: 11-12) has pointed some parameters of quality for the Bangladeshi universities. These are, 1) Used time for completing the course, 2) availability of books, journals and other materials for research, 3) educational qualifications of the teachers, 4) nature of the curriculum 5) co-curricular activities and 6) ability to cope the social needs.

As the quality of education is addressed by different indicators, quality is also influenced by different factors. The influencing factors vary from society to society, from region to region. For Dhaka University, *a student politics* is one of the major influencing factors of quality (Ahmad 2000).

1.9 Contextualization of the study

‘Student politics’ and ‘quality of education’ are two different issues. The first one is one the democratic rights of the students to be vocal towards their demands and the later one is an obvious for the university to meet the needs of the society. Hence, ‘*how quality of education can be influenced by the student political activities?*’ is a general question to ask. To answer this question, I want to say that the discussed issue is very relative and depends on the situation. In many universities, the presence of student organizations are not prominent and there is no or limited scope for the student organizations to influence quality of education. However, for the case of Dhaka University, there is active presence of student organizations and these organizations interfere with the academic and administrative activities of the university. As the student organizations are linked with the political parties, the organizations can use the power of their respective parties in support of them. A study conducted to explore the *campus violence by the student organizations and quality of education* (Ahmad 2000) regarded as the context of my study. That study explored that, campus violence occurred in the university campuses as a result of clash between the student political organisations. In that sense, the findings of that study is related with the present inquiry. That study took two public universities of Bangladesh as cases and Dhaka University was one of those. I want to share some of the findings of that study for my readers. This will be helpful to understand the context of my study.

1.9.1 Quality of education and campus violence: Case studies of Dhaka and Rajshahi Universities

Commissioned and funded by the Ministry of Education, The Peoples Republic of Bangladesh, the study was conducted by a team of experienced researchers. The study was carried out during October 1998 – January 1999. The study report was published by the University Press Limited.

To state the context of that study they have stated,

Quality of education and campus violence are related and reinforcing aspects of the educational process – the former is a basic purpose of a university to promote, while the later needs to be eliminated in the interest of the former. The various parties responsible for ensuring an effective educational process in the campus include, in the main, students, student organizations and groups, university teachers, university administration and the government – not necessarily in order. The important point is that all of them have crucial roles to play, which may differ from one another's in nature and contents, but all need to be geared towards creating a congenial atmosphere in the campus for effective teaching and learning and also for adequate research and other related academic activities (Ahmad 2000: 8-9).

The researchers have acknowledged that the roles of student organizations are important for ensuring quality of higher education. Together with the roles of other stakeholders, the roles of the student organizations should take into account to ensure quality in higher education in Bangladesh.

The main objective of that study was to review the quality of higher education and campus violence in Dhaka and Rajshahi Universities using data and information in respect of the past decades or so, collected from the records of the two universities and the views of randomly selected respondents consisting of students, student leaders, teachers, guardians, senate and syndicate member and administrators.

Specific objectives of the study were divided into two parts – objectives regarding quality of education and objectives regarding campus violence. The objectives were as follows.

Quality of Education

- i) To assess students' performance in the public examinations;
- ii) To identify the reasons for session-jams;
- iii) To explore the time-lag between the dates of examinations and those of the publication of results;
- iv) To identify the factors responsible for undue delay in the publication of results, if any;

- v) To examine the total class hours devoted to lessons during an academic session and the hours scheduled/required to be spent for the lessons for a given course/paper;
- vi) To examine the regularity of teachers' attendance in classes and students' perception of the benefits from class-room teaching; and
- vii) To consider other relevant aspects including course contents, qualifications of teachers, and teacher-student ratios.

Campus Violence

- i) To examine the nature of campus violence in the universities;
- ii) To explore the issues which triggered campus violence and the circumstances which led to such explosive situations;
- iii) To document a) the number of incidents of violence, b) the number of person days lost on account of violence, c) the number of academic days and person-days for which the institutions remained closed due to violence, d) the number of killings and injuries due to campus violence during the past decade or so, on an annual basis;
- iv) To collect informed opinion of the stakeholders in education about the causes of violence as well as security in the campus and suggest remedial measures;
- v) To assess the role of government institutions in maintaining peace on the campus;
- vi) To suggest appropriate strategies for initiating social and political measures for elimination of campus violence.

It can be seen that the study was carried out taking broad objectives to outline the campus violence and its' effect on quality of education. The study was commissioned by the Ministry of Education and the objectives were agreed by the Ministry. Perhaps the peoples of the Ministry wanted to find out the details about the campus violence and quality of education.

To achieve the objectives, the study team collected data using various methods. The adopted the following methodologies.

- Review of Registers and Gazette notifications of university results, documents relating to teachers' attendance, various monitoring and supervisory forms and reports, class routines, and Proctorial reports and records on campus violence. documents,
- Surveyed the students, teachers, policy maker and policy implementers, university administrators, syndicate and senate members and guardians.
- Interviewed students, teachers, syndicate members, senate members, university administrators, parents/guardians, policy makers and civil servants concerned with university education.

Using different questionnaires, they collected the data.

Salient findings of Ahmad (2000) study:

The major findings of the study are as below.

- Reviewing the result of the students of both Dhaka and Rajshahi universities, the study found that in Dhaka University 12 percent students secured first class in Honours level and 11 percent secured first class in Master' level. The rates were 2% and 4% respectively in Honours and Masters' level in Rajshahi University. In both the universities, on an average 80% placed second class, which was a reasonably good result.
- The study found that only a small number of students read related books and journals. Library was used by a limited number of students of both the universities. The researchers thought that even most of the students secure a reasonably good result, most of the students even do not read the textbooks. Instead, taking notes from the classroom lectures and collecting notes from the senior students are widely used for the preparation of examinations.
- The research study revealed that there was a problem of session-jam for both the universities. As a result of this phenomenon, a three-year course was prolonged to five years or more and a one-year course to two or three years. The researchers

found that the major causes of session-jam were political conflict and quarrel within the campus, a legacy of previous session-jams, delayed admission tests and late beginning of classes, unscheduled closure of universities (due to unrest and violence) and loss of class hours out of scheduled hours, shifting of examination dates due to pressure from students and other reasons, irregularity of some teachers in taking classes, and not completed on time.

- The respondents commented that the teaching-learning of both the universities were highly affected by the different political activities at the campuses during the university hours. They suggested banning meetings and processions in the campus during class hours, or at least, allocation of specific places for such meetings and processions so that classes were not disturbed. There was also another suggestion that student politics relating to the national party politics should be banned.
- The study revealed that good teachers will be recruited for ensuring quality of education for the universities. They respondents emphasized on creating good teacher-student relationship. For increasing the ability of the teachers, the respondents suggested to create wide scope of training in the country and abroad. They also opined to avoid involvement of the teachers in active party politics.
- The student organizations, teacher association and the university administration all had responsibilities to create a congenial teaching-learning environment at the university campuses. The study suggested that the political parties should leave the students alone to focus on their studies rather than work as political activist on behalf of the political parties.

The study focused deeply on the issue of campus violence. Acknowledging the great contribution of the students of Bangladesh during the Language Movement (1952), Liberation war (1971) and Anti-autocratic Movement (1990), the researchers commented that the student organizations were engaged to the group or party interests. The student organizations were following the party lines, often violently, in the pursuit of their programmes and activities in the campus. The major findings related to campus violence were as below.

Effects of violence

There were numbers of incidents of political violence took place during the years from 1989/89 to 1998/99. By this period, a total of 500 incidents of political violence occurred at Dhaka University campus and 25 students were died. The university remained close for 187days for campus violence.

Reasons of violence

The important causes of violence were as below:

1. reflection of confrontational politics of the national political parties in the kind of politics students pursue in the campus, which determines their behavioural pattern and activities,
2. erosion of moral values,
3. ever increasing educated unemployment and disenchantment among the youth as a result,
4. administrative weaknesses of the government,
5. affiliation of teachers with political parties and their use of students to serve the interests of the political parties and of the teachers involved,
6. easy access to arms,
7. prolonged student life as a result of session-jam,
8. placing more emphasis by some students to eventually move into leadership positions in national politics, and
9. failure of the educational system in place to provide an effective and attractive environment in the campus.

The study recommended some steps to be taken to prevent campus violence.

1.10 Adopted indicators of quality for the present study

Of the different phenomena of student politics, the above study considered only campus violence and attempted to explore the influence of campus violence on quality of education. My study attempts to explore the influence of student politics of Dhaka University on quality of education. So my study is related with that study. To identify the indicators of quality for my study, I have analysed that study to extend my understanding.

The important thing I need to say that I have emphasized on those indicators which are influenced by student politics of Dhaka University. There are many important indicators of quality which are not influenced by student politics to a great extent and I have excluded those from my study. The adopted indicators of quality of education of Dhaka University are as below.

1. *Normality of academic activities*: The university faces unscheduled closing because of student political activities as a result the teachers do not get enough time to complete the courses. This creates a culture of session jam. How the normal academic activities are influenced by student political activities is an indicator for my study
2. *Environment of teaching-learning activities*. Even to a day when the university remains open, the political activities might disturb the teaching-learning environment. This is another adopted indicator of quality.
3. *Dormitory situation*. The dormitories are suitable place for political activities of student organizations. How the political activities of dormitories influence the educational quality is adopted as an indicator of quality.
4. *Teacher recruitment policy*. Many have found that student politics has an effect over recruitment of teachers in Dhaka University. As teacher is an important indicator of quality, recruitment of good teachers is another indicator of quality.
5. *The commitment of the teachers towards academic activities*. Because of the close relationship between teacher politics and student politics, there is a question raised regarding the commitment of the teachers. Because of the political affiliation of the teachers, sometime they do not take proper measures to the student leaders and activists. On the other hand, question rose about their commitment to the academic activities of the university. Commitment of teachers is regarded as an indicator of quality.

Though the study by Ahmad (2000) did not consider the dormitory situation as an indicator of quality, I have adopted it as an indicator. This is because about half of the students of Dhaka University stay at the dormitories. Congenial environment is necessary

at the dormitories for students and this is important for the quality of education. However, the dormitories (mainly the male dormitories) are used as *recruiting ground for students into politics* by the student leaders of Dhaka University (Kabir 2002). Considering this, dormitory situation seemed as an indicator of quality for my study.

1.11 Research questions and objectives

The research question of this study is to explore how the student political activities of Dhaka University influence on the quality of education. To answer this question, the below-stated objectives have been adopted for this study.

1. What role the student politics of Dhaka University plays to maintain normal academic activities of Dhaka University?
2. How the campus-based political activities influence the teaching learning environment of Dhaka University?
3. What role the student politics play to recruit quality teacher at the university?
4. What role the student political activities play to maintain a congenial environment for the students live in dormitory?
5. How does the student politics effect on the commitment of the teachers?

1.12 Rationale of the study

A former president demanded the ban of party-linked student politics from the campuses of educational institutions of Bangladesh. Moreover, a former Prime Minister declared that the party-linked student politics would be banned. However, the political government couldn't do that. The present non-political government has announced to ban party-linked student politics. The Daily Star writes, "The government has initiated a move for a permanent ban on politics of students and teachers in public universities and colleges, in a significant bid to restore proper atmosphere for education" (The Daily Star, 05-04-2007). However, the issue of student politics is a discussed issue of Bangladesh from the past few years but at present this is a burning issue. So a study aimed to look ay the influence of student politics on quality of education might be helpful to have a way of thinking in this regard. At the time of data collection, my respondents showed deep interest about the findings of the study. From that point of view, it can be said that the study is rationale and this is a good time to conduct the study.

2 Chapter Two: Conceptual framework of the study

The framework is mostly a visual catalogue of roles to be studied (policymakers, linkers, adopters), and, within each role, where these people work and what they do (context, characteristics, behavior) (Miles and Huberman 1984: 29).

This chapter deals with the conceptual framework and perspective of this study. How does the student political activities influence the quality of education of Dhaka University is the main objective of this study. Dhaka University has its own governance system and quality assurance mechanism. On the other hand, there is active presence of student political organizations in the campus. The student political organizations have their own activities also. In the campus, the university administration is operating its own academic and administrative activities and at the same times the student organizations are observing their political programmes. So, it can be assumed that there is a risk of hampering the activities of university because of the political activities of the students. A conceptual framework will be discussed here to explore the relationship among the different variables of *student politics* and *quality of education* of Dhaka University.

2.1 Conceptual framework

In doing a research, the researcher has to be selective and to decide which dimensions are more important, which relationships are likely to be most meaningful, and, as a consequence, what information should be collected and analysed. A conceptual framework allows the researcher to select all these (Miles and Humerman 1984: 28). In defining a conceptual framework, Miles and Huberman said,

A conceptual framework explains, either graphically or in narrative form, the main dimensions to be studied – the key factors, or variables – and the presumed relationships among them. Frameworks come in several shapes and sizes. They can be rudimentary or elaborative, theory-driven or commonsensical, descriptive or casual (Miles & Huberman 1984: 28-29).

Miles and Huberman (1984: 29) have stated the roles a conceptual framework plays for the researcher.

First, it helps the researcher to specify who and what will and will not be studied.

Second, the framework assumes some relationship.

Third, it focuses and bounds some actors are going to be studied, along with some, not all, aspects of their activity (Miles and Huberman 1984: 29).

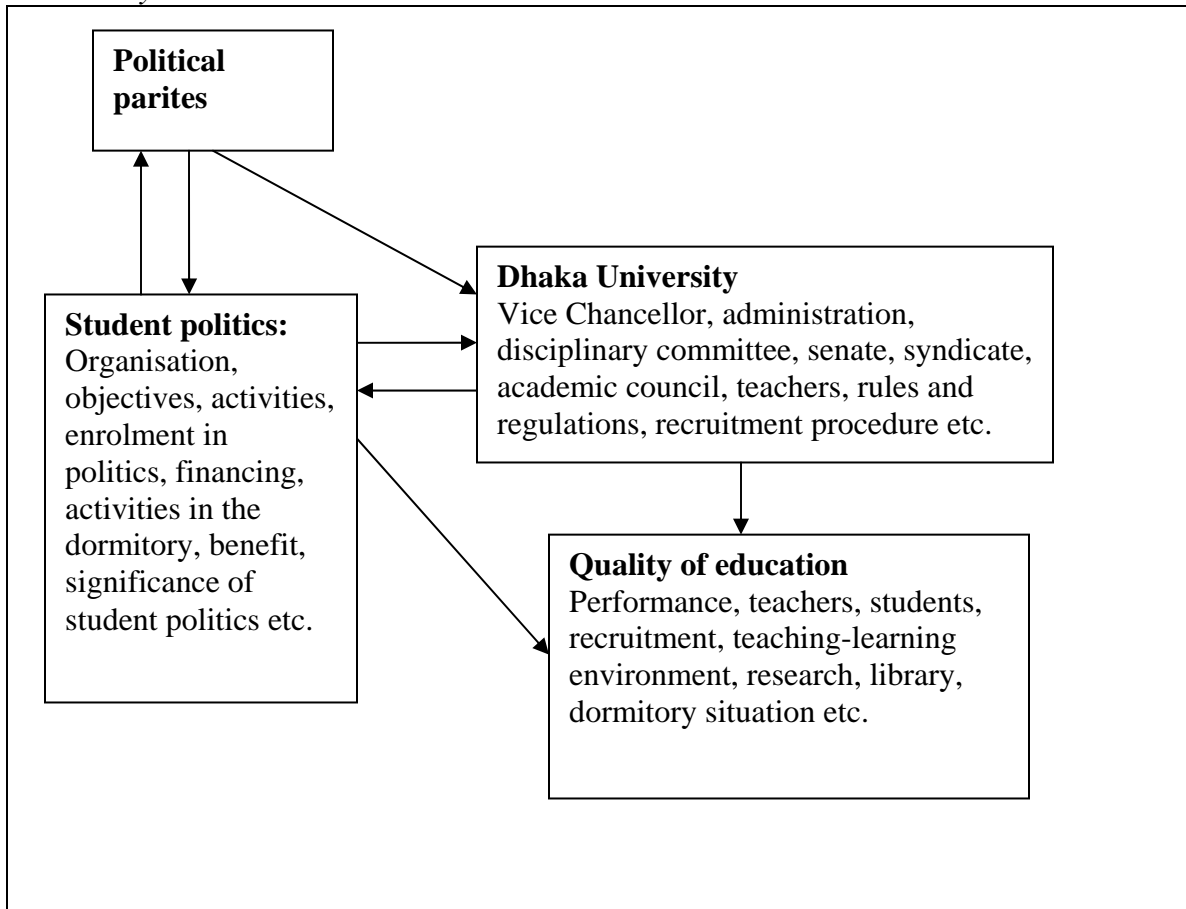
For the present study, I have developed a figure of conceptual framework (figure 1). In this framework, I have tried to show the different variables of the study as well as the relationship among the variables.

The topic of my study is – “Student Politics and Quality of Education: An Exploratory Study on Dhaka University”. There are two major dimensions here – student politics and quality of education. In this study, I want to explore how the political activities influence the quality of education of Dhaka University. Student politics has its different dimensions like organisational committee, decision making, activities, participants, goals, financing, recruitment process, significance, authority etc. On the other hand, university has its own mechanism of quality assurance. The university has its governance system and quality is addressed through the governance system. The Vice Chancellor, administration, disciplinary committee, senate, syndicate, academic council, faculties, rules and regulations, recruitment procedure etc. are part of the governance system. Dimensions of quality are Performance, teachers, students, recruitment, teaching-learning environment, research, library, dormitory situation etc.

In the conceptual framework, I have shown that the student politics is directly controlled by the political parties and there is a two-way relationship – political parties influence student politics and student politics influence the political parties. Both the political parties and student politics influence the governance system of the university and by this way quality of the university is influenced by political parties and by the student politics. In the below section I want to clarify the relationships between political parties, student

politics and Dhaka University. The governance system of Dhaka University and quality of education are also part of my discussion.

Figure1: Conceptual framework: Student politics and quality of education in Dhaka University



2.2 Political parties, their student wings and Dhaka University

There are many political parties in Bangladesh. According to the Political Party Resulation of 1976, each of the political parties must have their student wings (Siddiqui 1997). So all the major parties own their student wings, active in the educational institutions. Being the largest and oldest university of the country, Dhaka University is experiencing the active presence of student political activities. Before and short after independence, the Leftist student organisation, Chattra Union (Students' Union) was the biggest student organisation in Dhaka University. Chattra Union played an important role

during the liberation war of Bangladesh. The Leftist student organisations are still active in the Dhaka University campus but that has divided into parts and no longer influential like two other student organisations.

Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), the student wing of Bangladesh Awami League, is the oldest student organisation of Bangladesh. BCL started its journey in the 1950s and continuing at Dhaka University campus and in other educational institutions of the country. BCL has a long history of struggling against the occupying Pakistan and the organisation played an active role during the liberation war. Bangladesh Awami League is one of the two largest parties who have experience in forming government in Bangladesh. So BCL has experienced the patronship from the ruling party.

Jatiotabadi Chattra Dal (JCD), the student wing of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), is today's largest student organisation at Dhaka University. JCD started its journey in the early 1980s but has become stronger than other organisations because BNP has been in power of Bangladesh longer than any other parties of Bangladesh. So with the patronage of its mother party, JCD has made a strong ground in the educational institutions of Bangladesh. JCD is very active in Dhaka University also.

The religion-based student organisation, Islami Chattra Shibir, has its active presence in other universities but its activity is prohibited at Dhaka University. Because of the anti-liberation role of Jamate Islami Bangladesh, the mother party of Islami Chattra Shibir, during the liberation war in 1971, the politics of Shibir has been prohibited in the Dhaka University campus. Shibir tried to introduce its political activities in the Dhaka University campus but the BCL and other student organisations protested the step with a loud voice. They did rally in the campus and demanded banning Shibir politics in the campus. The VC then announced the news of banning Shibir politics from Dhaka University (The Daily Star, 11-10-2005).



Photo: Students, demonstrating against the politics of Islami Chhatra Shibir on the Dhaka University campus, pelt brickbats at the residence of the vice-chancellor yesterday after rallies. Courtesy: The Daily Star, 11-10-2005.

There are some other student organizations at Dhaka University but those do not have strong influence over the activities of the university today. Some non-political student organisations are also in the university campus busy with academic, cultural and social activities like music, play, debate, discussion etc. My study will focus on the political activities of the two largest student organisations - JCD and BCL - at Dhaka University. These two student organisations have experienced the government support in the recent past. Besides, the major political activities are circulated around these two organisations (Umar 2001).

The bondage between political parties and student organisations have began after independence of Bangladesh but the relationship got a new dimension during the regime of General Ziaur Rahman, started from 1977. General Ziaur Rahman introduced the student wing of his political party named as JCD. Some of my respondents informed that General Zia provided money and machines (arms) to the members of JCD. A teacher of Dhaka University told,

General Zia intended to make politics difficult for the politicians. Introducing political-party-linked student politics, he has really made politics difficult not only for the politicians but also for the students also (Interview Teacher1, 15-09-2006).

Why did the politicians of Bangladesh involve the students in national politics? This is a big question. With the experience of a long-standing movement against the British domination, the student community gathered a proven quality to topple or threat regimes. After the independence, there were no national issues like struggle against occupying foreigners and the students became divided within themselves. But the students were conscious about the interest of the peoples as well as of themselves. Nonetheless, the politicians were not satisfied with student participation in times of crises leading to agitation (Siddiqui 1997). At present, a strong student-support is a guarantee to hold the power of Bangladesh and this can be a possible cause of why the government overlooks the unexpected activities of the student leaders and activists (Kabir 2002).

In order to take control of the student organisations into own grip, the government began to interfere the election of DUCSU (Dhaka University Central Students Union). Though DUCSU worked successfully for over three decades, its role became narrower after the involvement of political parties (Siddique 1997). The last DUCSU election was held during the regime of General Ershad in 1990. The university authority initiated DUCSU election for several times. It was surprising to see that, the student wing of the ruling party supported the DUCSU election but with the protest of opposition organisations, that didn't come true. During the BNP regime the BCL protested the DUCSU election complaining the adverse political situation in the university and surprisingly during the Awami League regime, JCD protested DUCSU election complaining the same.

At present, the student leaders are nominated by their mother parties. Though the leaders claim themselves as student leaders, the students are not involved in their selection process. Sometimes leaders are selected as student leaders though they are not even students. Some student leaders were not student though they were selected as student leaders by their parties. A former president of JCD was not a student at the time of his leadership as president. The decision was criticised by many with a loud voice. Surprisingly the then prime minister argued that, being a student is not mandatory to be the president of JCD (Jatiotabadi Chattra Dal). At present, all the leaders of JCD are not

current students. The Daily Ittefaq write an editorial with heading, “*When the non-students are student leaders*” on May 8, 1997. In that editorial, the editor writes,

Though most of the student leaders of Dhaka University have finished their student life long before but they are still working as student leader. Some are extending their studentship year after year with the help of the University Authority. The university should not allow these non-student leaders in the university (The Daily Ittefaq, 08-05-1997).

AL has made a rule that the students aged above 29 will not get any post in the BCL. In many cases, the student leaders extend their studentship violating the university’s regulation. The political parties (mainly ruling party) appoint their own peoples in the higher posts of the university so the authority help the student leaders to extend their studentship.

‘Influencing the university administration’ is another dimension of student politics, which has an influence over the quality of the university. After forming government, the ruling party appoints new Vice Chancellor in Dhaka University (also in other public universities) from their supporters and it is a normal culture. Besides VC, the government appoints Pro Vice Chancellor, Proctor, Deans, Supervisors of the dormitories (provosts) and other administrative posts with their own peoples. So a mutual collaboration exists in the university between the student organisations and the university authority. A JCD leader told me,

I was told from the higher authority of BNP that I will get support from the VC, Pro-VC, Register, Provosts of the dormitories and even from the police. So I have to maintain the interest of my party in the university at any cost (Interview, JCD leader1, 21-10-2006).

When new government comes to the power, they appoint their own party-supporters in the higher posts of the university. So the student leaders and activists get support, sometime illegal support from the university authority. Perhaps, influencing the recruitment in the university is the most important effect by the political parties in the

university. Teachers and other personnel are recruited with the influence of political consideration. This has a direct consequence over the quality of the university. In my study, I will focus on this relationship among the political parties, their student wings and the university.

2.3 Governance and autonomy of Dhaka University

When we discuss about the university governance, we need to emphasise on some important values like, conceptions of governance, institutional autonomy, academic freedom, tenure and ownership of intellectual property, and the centrality of academics and of academic matters in the life of the university. Universities have a purpose of acquisition and dissemination of knowledge and governance generally refers to how an organisation guides itself and the processes and structures used to achieve its purposes (Miller 2000).

The Dhaka University Act of 1920 indicated the system of governance of the university before its' formal starting. A convention was set up for the university which confirmed that the government was responsible for establishing the university and ensuring financial arrangement for it. The university could enjoy the autonomy by the convention. That means, being fully financed by the government, the university will not be a government institution, and the university employees – academic or non-academic – will be the employees of the university, not of the government (Siddiqui 1997).

Autonomy is related with university governance. Siddiqui (1997) has lamented,

(Autonomy) has meant a relative freedom enjoyed by the universities in their internal management, impaired sometimes by governmental interference, politically motivated; and a much better record of academic freedom. Universities have felt free to frame curricula of study, to appoint teaching (and administrative) staff, and to control admissions and examinations according to their own policy (Siddiqui 1997: 156).

Murshid (1981) refers to the definition of autonomy, which was investigated by Sir Hector Hetherington and was accepted by the International Association of Universities

(IAU). According to that definition, there are five points of autonomy which the IAU considers as essential:

1. The university should have the right to select its own staff;
2. The university should be responsible for the selection of its students;
3. The universities should be responsible for the formulation of curriculum of each degree and for setting of academic standards;
4. Each university should have the final decisions as to the research programme carried out within its walls
5. The university should be responsible for the allocation, among its various activities, of financial resources available, i.e., space an equipment, capital funds and recurrent operating revenue (Murshid 1981: 137).

The Dhaka University Act of 1920 provided for an Executive Council (Syndicate) and a Court (Senate) which served as the institutional structure. The Act continued from 1921 to 1963. The Central Government of Pakistan replaced the Act in 1962 which replaced the previous autonomy system to another system which is still in action (Siddiqui 1997). The 1962 Act made the Senate inactive and extended the government control over the governance of university. *The Dhaka University Order 1973* stated the detailed governance system as well as the academic autonomy of the university. According to the Order, the main authorities of Dhaka University are:

- a) the Senate;
- b) the Syndicate;
- c) the Academic Council;
- d) the Faculties;
- e) the Committees of Courses;
- f) the Boards of Advanced Studies;
- g) the Finance Committee;
- h) the Planning and Development Committee;
- i) the Selection Boards; and
- j) such other authorities as may be declared by the Statutes to be authorities of the University (The University of Dhaka 2004: 13).

Among the authorities of Dhaka University, there was a scope of participation of the student representatives in the Senate only (The University of Dhaka 2004). The Senate of Dhaka University consists of the Vice-Chancellor, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor, the Treasurer, five Government officials to be nominated by the government, five members of the Parliament to be nominated by the Speaker, five distinguished educationists to be nominated by the Chancellor, five representatives of research bodies to be nominated by the Syndicate, ten teachers of colleges, the Chairman of the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education – Dhaka, twenty five representatives of registered graduates to be elected by such graduates, thirty five representatives of teachers of the university and five representatives of the students to be nominated by the Dhaka University Central Students Union (DUCSU) – all together 99 members (The University of Dhaka 2004).

Since there is no DUCSU election after 1990, there are no elected student representatives in DUCSU. As a result, at present there is no participation of student representatives at any level of the Authority of Dhaka University. However, through the political organizations, the students have an influence over the governance of Dhaka University.

In the above section, I have tried to discuss the relationship among the different variables of this study. In short, the student organizations are playing different roles – firstly, they have to obey some rules and regulations from the university and at the same time they follow the instructions of their mother parties. To play this double role, the student organizations overlook the rules of the university. Elected into power the government changes the administrators of the university and government-supported peoples become administrators. Being the government supported people, they easily get the top posts and get other facilities. So they try to keep the benefit of the government. The student organizations (mainly the pro-government student organization) gets help from them. This mutual dependence has an effect on quality. This study aimed to explore how student political organizations with the help of other stakeholders of university influence the quality of education.

3 Research Approach and Methodology

Words, especially when they are organized into incidents or stories, have a concrete, vivid, meaningful flavor that often proves far more convincing to a researcher – another researcher, a policy maker, a practitioner – than pages of numbers. So it is not surprising to see more and more researchers committed to qualitative data collection – enough so in educational research (Miles and Huberman 1984: 15).

This study is an in-depth probe into how the student political activities influence the quality of education. The research questions of this enquiry demanded mostly a qualitative technique. However, some quantitative data were also collected. This chapter delineates the research questions, approach and methodology, and describes the data collection techniques. Instrument development, field work, strengths and limitations and ethical consideration of the study are also part of this chapter.

3.1 Research questions

How the student political activities of Dhaka University influence over the quality of education of the university? - is the main research question of this study. In the introductory chapter, I discussed about definition of quality of education used for this study. In answering the main question of this study, the following are some sub-questions adopted for the present study.

1. What role the student politics of Dhaka University plays to maintain the academic calendar of the university?
2. How the campus-based political activities influence the teaching learning environment of Dhaka University?
3. What role the student politics play to recruit quality teacher at the university?
4. What role the student political activities play to maintain a congenial environment for the students live in dormitory?
5. How the quality of the university influenced by engaging the teachers in party politics?

The above questions started with '*what*' or '*how*' can be answered through a qualitative approach. Though a quantitative approach can be used in answering the questions starting with '*what*', in this study the '*what*' indicators do not refer to any quantitative amount or numbers. Rather '*what*' indicators used in the above four questions refer to role - which are qualitative in nature. The researcher has to know clearly about the type of data, and *what* s/he wants to find out from *whom* and *why* (Miles & Huberman, 1984). However, the scope of receiving new issues should not be foreclosed. To quote Miles & Huberman (1984),

Some direction is needed – but not too much: it is important not to foreclose on other ways of constructing and addressing the main research issues that the field site can disclose (Miles & Huberman 1984: 42).

Patton (1990) said that approach of fieldwork helped to construct the predetermined categories of analysis that contributes to the depth of qualitative inquiry. For selecting the approach of the study, I choose a qualitative approach rather than quantitative. Of the different approaches of qualitative research, I adopted exploratory approach for this study. To explore the influence of student politics on quality of education of Dhaka University, I applied a multi-instrumental qualitative approach comprising interviews, observations and focus group discussion. In the following section, I will discuss the adopted research approach and its relevance with the present study.

3.2 Qualitative research

Generating verbal and pictorial data, qualitative research tends to represent an in-depth picture of the social environment (Lund 2005). Bryman (2004) described qualitative research as an overarching generic term for investigative methodologies as ethnographic, naturalistic, anthropological, field, or participant research. Qualitative research is more open to using many types of evidences and discovering new issues. Qualitative techniques of data collection like in-depth interviews, focus group discussion, observation, projective methods, case studies, document analysis or pilot studies are relevant for exploratory research (Neuman 1991). The qualitative researchers assign human interactions a major role in explaining casual relationships among social

phenomena. Taking the role of the researcher into account, qualitative research differs to a large extent from quantitative research. In quantitative research, the researcher takes an objective and detached stance towards research participants and their settings, whereas qualitative researcher becomes personally involved with research participants, to the point of sharing a caring attitude (Lund 2005). Generally using open-ended questionnaires/checklists, data for qualitative research are collected in form of words rather than numbers (Miles & Huberman 1984). Instead of taking samples, qualitative research study cases to explore a deep insight about the social phenomena. Based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry, qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding that explores a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, report detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting. There is a wide scope of studying the causes and behind the causes of social actions in this type of research. Besides, gathering rich and contextual information in the voices of the participants, qualitative research aims to explore a view of the participants in their own settings (Lund 2005).

3.3 Exploratory approach

Of all the approaches of social research, exploratory research is very important.

Exploratory research is generally conducted about a new issue (Neuman 1991). This type of research can be the first stage of a sequence of studies. In other words, exploratory research is often conducted because a problem has not been clearly defined as yet, or its real scope is as yet unclear. Exploratory researchers frequently use qualitative techniques, because many qualitative techniques are less wedded to a theory or research question.

In educational research, the search for research methods that attempt to gain a holistic view of educational issues has tends to greater use of exploratory methods. As more educational research continues to adopt exploratory approaches, its reliability has gained in different literatures of social sciences (Newman 1991). I discussed the significance of exploratory approach with qualitative as well as educational research in the below section.

3.3.1 Relevance of qualitative approach in this study

Social phenomena can be studied by using either qualitative or quantitative approach (Neuman 1991). As education is an important social phenomenon, issues of education can also be studied either following qualitative and quantitative approach. The particular research design should be chosen according to research questions. To quote Crotty,

We should accept that, whatever research we engage in, it is possible for either qualitative methods or quantitative methods, or both, to serve our purposes (Crotty 1998: 15).

In this study I have used a qualitative approach. Of the different methods, the qualitative researchers choose the appropriate and relevant methods in collecting data, to achieve their purposes. They might begin a case study with one method of data collection and gradually shift to, or add, other methods. They might use multiple methods to collect data about the same phenomenon in order to enhance the soundness of their findings – a process called triangulation (Safarix Textbook 2006). This study has been conducted based mostly on fieldwork. Research questions of this study demanded a qualitative approach of inquiry. The primary research question of this study was to explore the influence of student political activities of Dhaka University on quality of education. To answer that question, some objectives were determined. In addressing those objectives, data were gathered interviewing the students who were engaged in politics as well as other stakeholders who experienced the effects of student politics of Dhaka University. Through interviewing a student leader, I got some new dimensions for my study and I tried to explore those issues interviewing other people. The qualitative approach allowed me to revise both my issues and methodologies at the field level. As I had a purpose to enter deep into the issues, I observed the political gatherings of the student leaders, political workers and students. In observing these gatherings and meetings I was a listener but I talked with some students to clarify my observation. Through that observation, I tried to understand the culture of the leaders and other related people. After the observation, I felt the need to interview the students who joined the gatherings everyday. I observed the political meeting for two days and each of the days I used for two hours. For four hours I observed the political gatherings and I observed the

gatherings for two days. I used observation guide for each of the observations. This provided me with important information. Through observation and interview, some questions were raised in my mind which I addressed at the time of focus group discussion. Through the focus group discussion, some issues were explored which could not be addressed through focus group discussion and then I arranged individual interview. To understand the effect of student politics on academic activities of the university, I interviewed an administrative officer. However, in collecting data for the present study, I reshuffled my techniques and issues at the field level which is a unique characteristic of qualitative research design.

The relevance of qualitative approach can be discussed from another point of view. Taking the role of the researcher into account, Lund (2005) has said,

Quantitative researchers take an objective, detached stance towards research participants and their setting, whereas qualitative researchers become personally involved with research participants, to the point of sharing a caring attitude (Lund 2005: 127).

In qualitative research, the researcher tends to become subjectively immersed in the subject matter. For my study, I became a tool for collecting data. I frequently interviewed the respondents, observed the contexts and conducted focus group discussions. Sometimes different techniques were used simultaneously. With the consent of the interviewees, I recorded the data using a tape recorder. In addition, I elaborated the context with my own experience. Using different data collection techniques of qualitative design allowed me to see the validity of data through triangulation. All these inspired me to choose qualitative design for conducting the study and that was found relevant.

3.4 Techniques of data collection

Though some quantitative data have been collected, most of the data are qualitative in nature. Table 1 delineates the techniques as well as respondents of this study. I used

different guides (for interview, observation and focus group discussion) for collecting data.

Table 1: Data collection techniques and respondents for this study

Serial	Technique	Respondents	Number(s)
1	Interview	Vice Chancellor of Dhaka University (DU)	1
		Administrative Officer of DU	1
		Supervisor of students' dormitory of DU	1
		Teachers of DU	3
		Student leaders of JCD and BCL of DU	4
		Former student of DU	2
		General students of DU	4
		Mustan/cadre	1
		Educational researcher	1
2	Observation	Meeting place of the political leaders (Modhu's canteen)	1
		Political meeting and gathering	2
3	Focus group discussion	General students of DU	2
4	Use of related books, articles and newspapers		
5	My own experience has been used in this study		

3.4.1 Preparing the guides

Different guides were used for interview, observation and focus group discussion.

Researchers have discussed about the risk of using structured instruments. According to Miles and Huberman,

Predetermined and structured instruments blind the researcher to the site. If the most important phenomena or underlying constructs at work in the field are not in the instruments, they will be overlooked or misrepresented (Miles and Huberman 1984: 42).

Keeping the risk of using structured instruments in mind, I developed guides instead of structured instruments. Validated instrument is the best guarantee of dependable and meaningful findings (Miles and Huberman 1984). In developing the guides I followed three steps.

Firstly, I prepared the first draft of the guides based on my own experience about the issue of the research. At the second stage I discussed with my supervisors. They provided me valuable suggestions. I went to Bangladesh with primarily developed guides. I took the opportunity to discuss with some of the researchers of Bangladesh who were experienced in social research. They provided a meaningful feedback to make second draft of the guides. At the final stage, I tested the guides in the field level to see how those worked. Based on the experience of that test, I made required change to the guides. However, I was always open to change, add or deduct issues of the guides in the original field situation. Because, I couldn't predict what will be happening in the actual field situation.

3.5 Researcher as an “insider”

I am “insider” for this study in two levels. Firstly, my research area of this study and my country is same, Bangladesh. Secondly, I studied the same institute, Dhaka University, where the study took place.

Being an insider, I enjoyed some opportunities to collect data. Being a Bengali speaker, I could easily understand the language of the study people. Known culture provided me to realize the attitudes of the respondent. As I studied at the same university earlier, I enjoyed an easy scope to get access to the respondents. I was experienced about the political culture of Dhaka University which also helped me to explain different terms related to student politics. Say, *Cadre* is a special term used to indicate the musclemen who use both muscles and machines (arms) against the opponent group and in support of the same group. As I am familiar with these terminologies, I could understand that easily.

However, being an “insider” doesn't guarantee for collecting neutral and valid data rather there are some risks for the “insiders”. As insiders are already experienced about the

culture of the respondents, this can make them biased to their own ideas. I have experience about the political culture of Dhaka University and from that experience it is not unusual that I have a mindset about the issue. So there was a risk for me to be biased to collect and analysis data regarding the issue of my research. My challenge was to maintain an unbiased stance in collecting and analyzing the data. I tried to listen to my respondents carefully instead of emphasizing on my own idea. Based on the collected data, I tried to explain what the issue it was. My experience helped me to explain the data. However, Silverman (2001) says that no research is value-free. Every human being constructs the social reality for him and acts according to that reality. The knowledge of the researcher is a useful tool for the research. Hence, my knowledge about the research issue is also a part of my study. Sometimes I have used my own experience to analyse the data where I found that relevant. In this way, I tried to use my experience for knowledge creation under this study.

3.6 Selection of sample

Generally the question of sampling better fits with the quantitative research approach where researchers generally tend to generalize from the findings. However, the qualitative researchers generally select cases, usually social settings (Miles and Huberman 1984). Hence, there are so many dimensions of social settings, a finite number of people, processes and events. On the other hand, if we take a close-look on the social settings, we can see that settings have subsettings, schools have classrooms, cultures have subcultures and so on. Taking this into account, the qualitative researchers select sample to manage data (Miles and Huberman 1984).

For my research, I used purposive sampling strategy, mostly snowball sampling (Patton 1990). Based on my own experience, I contacted the relevant people. Then I choose other people with the help of the earlier people who can be helpful to fulfill my objectives. However, I was careful not to be biased by the people from whom I took help. I think a short description might help the readers to understand the perspectives of the sample.

Student leaders: I interviewed two JCD leaders - a top level leader from JCD Central committee and a leader of a hall. Similarly I interviewed two BCL leader – one from the central committee and another was a leader of a dormitory.

Teachers: I interviewed three teachers of Dhaka University. One from the political science department, one from the Sociology department and another from the Institute of Education and Research.

Supervisor of the dormitory: I interviewed a supervisor of a dormitory.

Participants of focus group discussions: I conducted two focus group discussions – one with male students and another with female students. I included ten students in each of the discussions. I included students from different years and disciplines.

Educational Researcher: I interviewed a prominent educational researcher of Bangladesh who has wide experience of conducting research on social science and education.

Mustan: I interviewed a Mustan who was engaged with a leading student organization of Dhaka University.

General students: I interviewed four non-political student of Dhaka University. Of them two were female. A female and a male student lived in dormitories and other two students lived in private houses.

I have used codes to identify the different respondents (Annex 1).

3.7 Field work

I collected all the data by myself. The data were collected during late August to late November 2006. As I stayed in a nearby area of Dhaka University, it was easy for me to go to the university frequently. Some of my former friends from Dhaka University, who are now working at the university helped me to contact respondents. Usually I called the respondents through their mobile phone. As I was collecting the data as a student of a foreign university, they were curious to talk with me. It seemed to me that the student leaders were curious to talk with me because of my engagement with a foreign university otherwise they would have been no interested to talk with others about the issue of student politics. I set the time and place for meeting with the respondents. Most of the interviews I have taken were held on the university premise. With the consent of the

interviewees, I tried to use tape-recorder during the interviews. Though the noisy situation of the university was not a good environment for interviewing, the respondents preferred that situation. I interviewed some student leaders and students in their dormitories. The student leaders were very busy with their activities and in some cases they couldn't maintain the appointment. I have interviewed one student leader in his office as he was working as an important person for his main party. I interviewed some respondents more than one time because I felt the necessity to clarify some issues.

At the time of interview, the respondents were very curious to know about how I got scholarship in Norway. Whether they can get such a scholarship and how can they get it were also the matter of their interest. I answered these questions cordially. This discussion helped to make an easy relationship with the respondents. Among the respondents, the student leaders made a different situation for me. Being a student leader, s/he achieves power, property and status without engaging any job or business. During the student life, they were much more powerful and rich compared to the other students. So, question may rise about the way of earning this property and status. I experienced that the student leaders did not like to be asked about the source of their power and property. As I was asking about different political issues, they were trying to understand my political view. Whether I am asking any question to investigate their fault or whether I am a supporter of opponent party were the issues they were trying to understand about me. As they were always trying to understand my stance, I was very careful about my position.

Focus group discussion with the male students was held in a dormitory where the students lived while discussion with the female students was organized on open campus. Number of participants was ten in each of the discussions. The students were willing to help me. There were some differences between the two focus group discussions. The female students were less disturbed by the student leaders than the male students. Male students were more spontaneous to share their thinking. However, there were silent participants in both the groups. I invited them to take part in discussions. I observed dominant speakers in both the groups. To manage the dominant speakers, I requested

them politely to hear from others. I was careful so that the dominant speakers do not turn to inactive. As I found a dominant speaker had many things to say, I interviewed him later. He provided important information for the study.

I interviewed a *Mastan* (muscle man), who has had both type of experience – he has assaulted someone and others have assaulted him. During the time of interviewing the Mustan, I was careful to him. This was a different experience in this sense that the Mustan has both the experience of assaulting and being assaulted. However, he was friendly in talking with me.

3.7.1 Interview

Talking with the people, we can attempt to understand about their world and life. In the social studies, the researchers frequently try to understand the different phenomena of human beings. To do so, the researchers listen to what the people themselves tell about their lived world, hear them express their views and opinions in their own words, learn about their views on their work situation and family life, their dreams and hopes (Kvale 1996). To describe the aims of research interview, Kvale has written,

The qualitative research interview attempts to understand the world from the subjects' point of view, to unfold the meaning of peoples' experience, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations (Kvale 1996: 1).

Through interview, the social researchers yield rich insights into peoples biographies, experiences, opinions, values, aspirations, attitudes and feelings (May 2001). Of the different type of interviews, structured, semi-structured and informal, the qualitative interview has a harmony with semi-structured interview (Kvale 1996). To illustrate the characteristics of qualitative interview, (Mason 1996: 38) said, "Qualitative interview is usually intended to refer to in-depth, semi structured or loosely structured forms of interviewing". In qualitative interview, the researcher cannot keep him/herself away from the research process rather the role of the researcher is very important in qualitative interview. In my study, using semi-structured interview-guide, I have interviewed the

respondents to explore the influence of student politics of Dhaka University on quality of education.

3.7.2 Observation

Participant observation origins may be sought in social anthropology, it was the Chicago School of Social Research, particularly Robert Park, who encouraged students to study, by observation (May 2001). Since then observation is being used as an important technique of collecting data for the social research. Qualitative methods of data collection, such as interviewing, observation, and document analysis, have been widely used. Participant observation, for many years, has been a feature of both anthropological and sociological studies. In recent years, the field of education has seen an increase in the number of qualitative studies that include participant observation as a way to collect information. In defining observation, Mason said,

The term observation and in particular participant observation is usually used to refer the methods of generating data which involve the researcher immersing dimensions of that setting, interactions, relationships, actions, events and so on, within it (Mason 1996: 60).

Marshall & Rossman (1989: 79) defined, “Observation is the systematic description of events, behaviors, and artifacts in the social setting chosen for study.” Observations enable the researcher to describe existing situations. Fieldwork involves “Active looking, improving memory, informal interviewing, writing detailed field notes, and perhaps most importantly, patience” (Dewalt & Dewalt 2002: vii). Participant observation is the process enabling researchers to learn about the activities of the people under study in the natural setting through observing and participating in those activities. It provides the context for development of sampling guidelines and interview guides (Dewalt & Dewalt 2002). Schensul et al., (1999: 91) define participant observation as “The process of learning through exposure to or involvement in the day-to-day or routine activities of participants in the researcher setting”.

Bernard (1994) added to this understanding, indicating that participant observation requires a certain amount of deception and impression management. Most researchers, he

notes, need to maintain a sense of objectivity through distance. In my study, I observed the meeting places where the student leaders, political workers and general students meet. Here the leaders become closer to the students and the students get the scope to focus their political and personal issues to the student leaders. I participated in the political meetings, organized by the student organizations. Like other participants, I became an active listener to the speakers and sometimes, with others, was clapping to inspire the speakers. There has been much debate about the extent to which the researchers can take part in the situations they study, and conversely whether it is possible or desirable simply to observe without participation (Burgess 1984). To overcome my misunderstanding about the observed issues, I talked with some students. Participant observation is characterized by such actions as having an open, nonjudgmental attitude, being interested in learning more about others, being aware of the tendency for feeling culture shock and for making mistakes, the majority of which can be overcome, being a careful observer and a good listener, and being open to the unexpected in what is learned (Dewalt & Dewalt 1998). Denzin & Lincoln (1998) suggested that the observational data should enable the researcher to enter and understand the situation that is being described. I tried to use observation as a tool of data collection in this way.

3.7.3 Focus group discussion

Allowing researchers to explore group norms and dynamics around issues and topics, focus group discussion constitutes a valuable tool of investigation (May 2001). The word “Focus” indicates that some factors will be clearly focused for focus group discussion. The issue(s) of discussion, time, place, participants, recording procedure – everything needs to be clearly focused or settled for arranging a focus group discussion. For my study, I conducted two focus group discussions – one with male students and another with female students who were staying at dormitories of Dhaka University. As May (2001) suggested that a focus group discussion involves eight to twelve peoples, I included 10 students for each of the focus group discussions. At the beginning of the discussions, I gave a short lecture describing the rules of the discussion. Then I raised the issue of discussion. During the discussion, some students were very responsive and some were not. As I encouraged the silent participants to take part, they also shared their opinions. I was aware to manage the dominant speakers and I managed them without

making them inactive. I not only used tape-recorders during the discussions, I also used paper and pencil to take important note. The participants were giving arguments among them. Consensus was made in some issues and there was debate in other issues. Generally, focus group discussions cannot be used as a unique method of data collection rather it helps to verify the collected data through other techniques. Focus group discussions allowed me the scope to get a mass view about the studied issues.

3.7.4 Use of related books, journals and newspapers

I have supplemented related data from different books and articles. I have used reports and articles published in some newspapers of Bangladesh. This is because to the best of my knowledge, there are no available books or journal articles on the issue of my research. Besides, many reports and articles are published in newspapers regarding the issue of my study. I was careful to use the politically unbiased newspapers and I only used those which are renowned as non-political newspapers. The names of the newspapers are The Daily Star, The Daily Prothom-ALo, The Daily Ittefaq, The Daily Sangbad and The Daily Bhorer Kagoz. Though The Daily Bhorer Kagoz is a AL-supported newspaper, I used information from this newspaper because it published information collected from the university administrative office. However, I didn't use any of the reports of The Daily Bhorer Kagoz which expressed the view of that paper. The reports and articles of newspapers are only used to supplement data, not as main data.

3.7.5 Use of photographs

I have used four photos in my thesis as I found those relevant for my study. Three photos were published in a newspaper and in Bangladesh the published photos can be used by anyone using the source. I have used the sources of the photos. The another photo was collected from the Curator of the *DUCSU (Dhaka University Central Students Union) Collection Centre*³. He is authorised to take pictures of political and other programmes held at the university premises. He preserves those photos at the DUCSU Collection Centre. Anyone can collect pictures from him. I have also used his name as source of the picture.

³ There is a collection centre of DUCSU at Dhaka University which is like a museum. The historical photos, documents, memories are preserved there.

3.8 Strengths of the study

The strengths of the study are stated below.

1. For me, the issue of the research is the strongest part of my study. In Bangladesh, student politics is a burning issue and there is a debate about the significance of the ongoing trend of student politics. During data collection, the respondents expressed their curiosity about the findings of the study.
2. I collected all the data for the present study so there was no or limited scope to change or miss data.
3. Using multiple techniques of collecting same data provided me to see the validity of collected data.
4. The context, environment and culture of the studied field were known to me. So I could understand the respondents and their context easily.
5. As I conducted the study as a student of a foreign university, the respondents expressed their curiosity to me which helped me to get access to the respondents.

3.9 Limitations of the study

The below stated limitations of the study have been observed by the researcher.

1. I felt a scarcity of related literature about the studied issue because so far I know, no study yet to be conducted to explore the studied issue.
2. The knowledge of the researcher is a limitation for every research because the quality of the study cannot overcome the knowledge of the researcher. From that point of view, my knowledge was a limitation for the study.
3. Dhaka University remained close for most of the time of my data collection and the situation was adverse to visit there frequently. This allowed limited scope for me to collect data properly.

3.10 Ethical consideration

Since World War II, ethical issues in the social sciences have become a topic of growing concern. It is because, the researchers tried to ensure the studies to be directed toward worthy goals (Kimmel 1998). In the current decades, scientific and societal mechanisms and collective guidelines have evolved to provide assurance both to investigators within social science disciplines and to the general public. In doing research, ethic begins and

ends with a researcher. A researchers' personal moral code is the strongest defense against unethical behavior (Miles & Huberman 1984).

Any researcher considers moral and ethical questions. Am I exploiting people with my questions? What about their privacy? Is my methodology of data collection right? Most professions have well-defined codes of ethics. For example, the American Psychological Association (1992), the American Sociological Association (1989) and the American Educational Research Association (1992) have developed codes for their respective associations (Miles & Huberman 1984). The ethical system and structures to which social researchers now subscribe largely by virtue of voluntary codes, governmental regulations and professional standards, may be said to reflect community attitudes, professional experience and technical standards. Having replaced the so-called unwritten professional ethic that presumed individuals would act in fair, considers and compassionate ways with regard to the rights of others, the current federal regulation and professional codes of ethics set forth ethical standards for guidance and control with in social research discipline (Kimmel 1998).

At the time of data collection for the present study, I tried to follow the ethical standards of the American Educational Research Association (AERA). The AERA stated guidelines for educational researchers:

Educational researchers conduct research within a broad array of settings and institutions, including schools, colleges, universities, hospitals, and prisons. It is of paramount importance that educational researchers respect the rights, privacy, dignity, and sensitivities of their research populations and also the integrity of the institutions within which the research occurs. Educational researchers should be especially careful in working with children and other vulnerable populations. The standards are intended to reinforce and strengthen already existing standards enforced by Institutional Review Boards and other professional associations. Standards intended to protect the rights of human subjects should not be interpreted to prohibit teacher research, action research, and/or other forms of practitioner inquiry so long as: the data are those that could be derived from normal teaching/learning processes; confidentiality is maintained; the safety and welfare of participants are protected; informed consent is

obtained when appropriate; and the use of the information obtained is primarily intended for the benefit of those receiving instruction in that setting (AERA 2000: 3).

A fundamental ethical principle of social research is, one should must be informed before giving any data. Moreover, anyone never be coerced to participate that is called *informed consent* (Neuman 1991). I tried my best to ensure the ethical rights of the respondents. Before starting data collection, I took permission from the authority of Dhaka University. I informed most of the respondents about the aims of my research before interviewing. In setting the place and time of interview, I gave them freedom. “The collected data will only be used for the study and no data will be revealed to others” – I always assured them. Besides, I reminded them that they were equally free to talk or do not talk about any of the issues. At the time of data collection, I tried to respect their personality and information.

In informing the student leaders about the issue of the research, I was a bit strategic. In answer of their questions, I generally told them that I was trying to explore the student politics of Dhaka University rather than telling the specific objective (how the student political activities of Dhaka University influence the quality of education?) of the study. To answer their next question, I told them that “How is the political activities and education of the university going on” – Were the issue of the interview. The position and attitude of the student leaders made me aware to take such strategy. Generally they tried to understand my view about them. I told the specific objectives to a leader and he began to ask me many questions like which party I support, who told me to conduct the study, whether I was assigned by a particular group etc. Finally he didn’t provide me the interview. For this reason, to get the access to talk to them, I told the research question of my research rather than the objectives. Anyone can think that I have violated the ethical rights. However, informed consent is impossible all the time in qualitative studies because events in the field and the researchers’ actions cannot be anticipated (Miles & Huberman 1984). But during the interview I gradually told them about the objectives of my research. Here I just told the specific objectives to them a bit later but I didn’t hide

anything of my study what they wanted to know. Thus, I think I didn't violate any ethical issues of my respondents.

I was willing to record the interview and all the time I asked their consent. A teacher and a student leader didn't allow me to record their speech. So I didn't do that. At the time of observation, I didn't take any permission because there was no such authority. I observed university canteen and joined political meetings. In both of the cases, hundreds of students were there and I couldn't find any one from whom I can take permission.

I was careful about the given information by the respondents. One student leader told me something but in my presence he told different things about the same issue to another peoples. He requested me not to quote the things he told to others. I kept his request. Some respondents were willing to hide their actual names and position. I kept them anonymous.

4 Data Analysis and Findings

This chapter deals with the data, data analysis and findings of the present study.

According to the research question and the objectives of this study, attempt has been taken to explore the influence of student politics of Dhaka University on quality of education. To do so, I needed to determine some areas of student political activities. In the below section, I will be presenting the student political activities of Dhaka University based on the data I collected from different sources. At the same time how these activities influence the adopted indicators of quality of education will also be presented.

4.1 Political party-linked student organisations instead of student union

The Dhaka University Central Students' Union (DUCSU) was formed in 1922-23, just the year after starting of Dhaka University, to promote cultural and other activities within the university and cultivate spirit of cooperation among the students of different halls. DUCSU represented the problem of the students in the University Senate meetings. The representatives of DUCSU were elected by the students. DUCSU maintained its normal journey up to 1990. However, DUCSU has remained a non-functional institution after 1990, which once played as a breeding ground for national movements (The Daily Star, 25-04-2007). As DUCSU has become inactive, there is no Students' Union in Dhaka University. As a result of that the cultural and other activities are about absent. Instead of Students' Union, political party-linked student organizations have emerged in Dhaka University. The leaders of the political parties select the leaders of their respective student wings. As a result, the leaders of the student organizations are not accountable to the university authority or to the students. At present, the mother party is the main authority of a student organization. In stating the position of such student leaders, a professor of Dhaka University wrote,

The student leaders have two authorities simultaneously – educational authority and political authority. This creates a problem for them. The political authorities assign them some activities have to be observed in the campus and at the same time there are some rules and regulations of the university. In such a situation, the student leaders carry on the assignments of their parties even violating the rules and regulations of

the university. If the students were elected by the university, they should have only one authority that could bound them to maintain the benefit of the university (Khan 2001: 59).

In an interview with the Daily Prothom-Alo, the Vice Chancellor of Dhaka University informed that there was no chance to be organized of DUCSU election that year (The Daily Prothom-Alo, 12-05-2007). From the above discussion, it can be understood that though the leaders of student organizations claimed themselves as student leaders, they did not represent the students. It can easily be understood that these leaders would be more careful to the benefit of their parties than the benefit of the students.

4.2 Campus of Dhaka University: an open field for political activities

In Dhaka University campus, the student organisations organise different political activities like meeting, procession, sit-in, political gatherings etc. I attempted to explore about the issues, objectives, participants and related other issues of those activities.

4.2.1 Political activities for whom?

At the time of my data collection, Bangladesh was passing a crisis period regarding the formation of *Care Taker Government*. The national political parties were in street demanding to form the Care Taker Government as they wanted. The student organizations of Dhaka University were also in movement regarding the issue of Care Taker Government. I found that JCD was supporting the stance of its mother party BNP (Observation, meeting of JCD, 19-09-2006) and the stance of Awami League was supported by its student wing BCL. A senior leader of BCL told me that BNP was trying to formulate the Care Taker Government by the BNP-supported people to get benefit in the election. He added that BCL would protest the plan of BNP at any cost (Interview, BCL leader1, 10-10-2006).



Photo: Political leader in Dhaka University Campus: Mr. Tareq Zia, Senior Joint Secretary of BNP and son of former Prime Minister of Bangladesh Begum Khaleda Zia, arrives at Dhaka University campus to meet the JCD leaders. The JCD leaders welcomed him. Courtesy: Mr. Gopal, Curator, DUCSU collection centre, Dhaka University.

However, the claim of BCL was challenged by a leader of JCD. He told me that AL was trying to overlook the constitutional rule to include their chosen people to the Care Taker Government. He also promised to prevent the plan of Awami League (Interview, JCD leader1, 27-09-2006).

How does the issue of care taker government related with the students of Dhaka University? Or what role the authority of Dhaka University could play to solve the problem of Care Taker Government? Both the JCD and BCL leaders opined that as an important part of the educated society, the students of Dhaka University should support the solid stand of the political parties (Interview, JCD leader, 27-09-2006 and interview, BCL leader, 10-10-2006). No question, both the leaders claimed their own stand as solid.

I asked the Vice Chancellor of Dhaka University about this issue. The Vice Chancellor said,

The movement regarding Care Taker Government is not related with the academic issue of Dhaka University. Though it is a nationally important issue, the political leaders should solve that. The authority of the Dhaka University can't play any role here (Interview, Vice Chancellor, 16-11-2006).

It was clear that the issue of Care Taker Government was an issue of political parties and the Vice Chancellor commented the same. A non-political student told me that the general students were not engaged with the movement of Care Taker Government as there was nothing to do in that regard (Interview, general student1, 04-11-2006). By the opinions of JCD and BCL leaders, it was clearly understood that they were trying to implement the political agendas of their respective parties. Ahmad (2000) also found that the student organizations of Dhaka University were engaged with the agendas of their mother parties. Various respondents told me that both the BCL and JCD tried to be engaged with the issues of their mother parties (Focus group discussion1, 15-11-2006 and focus group discussion2, 11-11-2006).

In course of the movement of Care Taker Government, JCD tried to turn BCL out from the campus of Dhaka University. In such a situation, BCL called a strike at the university and the university remained closed for about two months and during this period the university was far away from the academic activities (The Daily Star, 14-01-2007). Here the political activities of the student organizations regarding non-academic issue caused unexpected closing for the university which influenced the quality of education in a negative direction.

4.2.2 Causes behind capture of the campus

Though the students of Dhaka University have a proud history of standing up and fighting for the rights of the people, the student organisations are now under the umbrella of political parties (Ahmad 2000; Siddiqui 1997). Incidents of political violence take place at the university campus as each of the organisations intend to capture and maintain

its strong-armed position ahead of the other organisations. Why do the student organisations try to take control over the university campus? The student organisations of Dhaka University get some facilities from the university and if an organisation can maintain its absolute control over the university, the organisation alone can enjoy the facilities (Siddiqui 1997). To clarify the fact, Siddiqui said,

Often activists of a particular group, usually the group linked with the ruling party, operate as a pressure group, to gain some advantage from the administration. As a rule, they expect a share of the gain from contractors working on some building project. They often justify this by saying that they ‘managed’ the contract in favour of the contractor, so it is to them that the contractor owes his contract (Siddiqui 1997: 109).

Many incidents of political clash occurred between BCL and JCD regarding the distribution of the share received from the contractors (Hannan 2000). Besides this economical advantage, the student organisation, which control the campus get facilities and adopt many devious ways to secure admission of their fellows in the university who would otherwise fail to secure admission tests (Siddiqui 1997).

There was another reason behind taking control over the campus of Dhaka University. Through interviewing the leaders of JCD and BCL, I was informed that the student groups linked with the opposition parties try to develop anti-government movement from the campus of Dhaka University (Interview, BCL leader1, 10-10-2006; Interview, JCD leader1, 27-09-2006). As a result, the student group, linked with the ruling party tries to maintain effective control over the campus so that they could prevent the other groups from developing any anti-government movement. The BCL and JCD leaders provided me several examples regarding this issue. A JCD leader told that, on February 27, 2004, Dr. Humayun Azad, a professor of Dhaka University was seriously assaulted by unknown assailants (Interview, JCD leader1, 27-09-2006). Sporadic protest took place at the campus by the teachers, general students as well as the different student political organisations of Dhaka University (The Daily Star, 28-02-2004). However, after few days, taking the incident of assailant as an issue, BCL tried to develop anti-government movement. At that time, JCD tried to stop the movement with the help of the policemen.

With this rivalry situation of JCD and BCL, there was a hot situation at the campus of Dhaka University. JCD took a strong position against the protestors at that time. To stop the movement, JCD attacked over the rally of the students. According to the Daily Star,

Over 100 students, including women, and five journalists were injured at Dhaka University yesterday as police and key ruling party's student wing launched unprecedented multi-pronged attacks on demonstrators gathering to protest the stabbing of prominent writer Humayun Azad. Police batoned demonstrating students at will while the frenzied Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) activists beat them with sticks and captured podiums that offered platform to protesting teachers and students, witnesses said. Police also used over 100 teargas shells to break the agitators while JCD activists armed with lethal rods, sticks and tree branches swooped on the protesters (The Daily Star, 04-03-2004).



Photo: A woman student falls on the ground as police swoop on Dhaka University students yesterday. Courtesy: The Daily Star, 04-03-2004.

Stating this event, the JCD leader told that the BCL was trying to make problem for the BNP government but JCD protested the conspiracy of BCL with the support of the general students (Interview, JCD leader1, 27-09-2006).

On the other hand, a BCL leader told me that, JCD took opposite stand of the demand of general students. When the general students tried to move regarding any academic issue, JCD protested them. The BCL leader commented that, by this way JCD tried to destroy the power of movement of the general students of Dhaka University (Interview, BCL leader1, 10-10-2006). Providing an example he said, the students of Dhaka University

were in movement demanding to establish *Four-Year's Honours Degree as Professional Degree*. According to that demand, the students demanded that the four-year' honours degree should be equal to three years' honours degree and one year Master degree. This was an academic issue but the JCD members attacked over the students while they were in procession. The Daily Star writes,

A series of attacks by activists of the ruling BNP's student front yesterday injured at least 50 students, mostly members of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), who backed an indefinite strike at Dhaka University (DU).

The strike enforced by DU science faculty students started on Wednesday to press the demand for immediate acceptance of the four-year honours degree as full professional qualification.

Yesterday's attacks by the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) activists with hockey sticks and iron rods prompted the BCL, the student chapter of the main opposition party Awami League, to call an indefinite strike on the campus from tomorrow (The Daily Star, 01-08-2003).



Photo: Campus in Rumpus: Activists, top, of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) prepare on the nose of law-enforcers to attack the activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League on Dhaka University campus yesterday; JCD activists beat up Chhatra League adherents with a wooden block, bottom right, and the JCD activist, bottom left, who attacked a reporter of The Daily Star, 01-08-2003.

The interesting thing was this that acknowledging the significance of the demand, the university authority accepted that and declared that they have taken appropriate steps in that regard. Then the question arises, why did the JCD members attacked to the students who were in procession? A JCD leader told that, the BCL was trying to destroy the academic activities of the university. He added that the BCL members were trying to develop anti-government movement through these types of movements (Interview, JCD leader1, 27-09-2006).

However, this was not the story of last few years only rather after 1990 this was the main role of the student organisations in support of their mother parties. Here a statement of Begum Khaleda Zia, the Chief of BNP and former Prime Minister of Bangladesh might be evident. In 1999, when BNP was in opposition role and AL was in power, she was addressing to the council meeting of JCD. As JCD was failed to develop any anti-government movement, she defined some weaknesses of JCD and told them to overcome the weaknesses. In her speech, she told that the JCD should take the responsibility to change the government (The Daily Sangbad, 06-04-1999). Sheikh Hasina, the chief of AL and former Prime Minister of Bangladesh, has provided the same assignment to the BCL many times. If one visits the campus of Dhaka University, s/he will find many slogans written in the nearby walls of Dhaka University. Through those writings, JCD has assured Khaleda Zia that they will protest the opponent groups even sacrificing their lives. On the other hand, there are many slogans written by the BCL and they have promised to Sheikh Hasina that BCL would fight against all to establish the ideology of her. One of the slogans written by JCD explores the meaning as, “JCD is the confidence of Khaleda Zia”. A slogan written by BCL explores, “As we [BCL members] are in street, no fear for Sheikh Hasina”. So it can be understood that both BC and JCD were working as the helping hand of their mother parties. Sayeed (2005) appropriately considered the student organisations as the *Private Army* of the political parties.

In this section, I was trying to discuss about why the student group, generally the group linked with ruling party, tries to take control over the campus. Talking with the leaders of JCD and BCL, general students and the teachers, it was understood that the student organisations try to take control over the campus so that they could be capable to play effective role for the betterment of their respective mother parties. The interest of the university is hardly considered by the student organisations rather the university faces unexpected closing for this culture of capturing. No doubt, this culture creates problem for ensuring quality of education.

4.2.3 Culture of capturing the dormitories

Like taking control over the campus, the student organisations try to capture the halls of the university. The student organisation of ruling party generally occupies the student

halls (Kabir 2002). The control over the halls provides many facilities to the student organisations. Firstly, the leaders of the occupying organisation use the halls as safe places for them. Turning even the legal students out from their *seats*⁴, the student leaders stay at the halls. Sometimes people who are not students of Dhaka University but helpful for the organisation stay at the halls (The Daily Prothom-Alo, 04-05-2007). Prothom-Alo has published an interview of a brilliant student who got the allocation for a seat at the hall before three months but he was unable to stay at his seat because a student leader was staying at that seat. The student had met with the *Provost*⁵ of the hall several times to get his seat but the problem had yet to be solved. In an interview with the Daily Prothom-Alo, the Provost expressed his helplessness and said that he was trying to help the student (The Daily Prothom-Alo, 04-05-2007). Overlooking the *seat allocation rule*⁶ of the university, the student leaders provide seats to their fellow students who are supportive to them. It can be mentioned here that though the student leaders were not the authority to allocate any seat, they provided seats to their fellow students or turned the students out from their seats.

It is a widely practised phenomenon for Dhaka University that the student leaders stay at the halls for many years after completing their student lives. The Daily Prothom-Alo has published some information about the student leaders who were staying at different halls even after finishing their student life. According to that information, the BCL leaders were staying at a hall capturing 15 rooms. One of the supervisors of the hall noticed the leaders to quit the rooms. This made the leaders angry and they had physically assaulted the supervisor. Provosts of different halls have agreed that many student leaders were in their halls who had no legal basis to stay there (The Daily Prothom-Alo, 04-05-2007).

⁴ Seats indicate the beds of dormitories, where students sleep. For Dhaka University, generally there is more than one bed in a room. The beds are called as seats.

⁵ There are some supervisors for each of the dormitories of Dhaka University. The chief of the supervisors is called as *Provost* and the other supervisors are called as *house tutors*

⁶ There are rules for providing seats to the students. As number of seats are inadequate comparable to number of students, the authority considers results and seniority in providing seats.

Because of this type of capturing, the general students who get seats cannot stay at their seats. All the students, I interviewed, agreed the situation. One of my respondents informed me that he couldn't stay his own seat as a student leader of JCD stays there. He shared his friends' seat as he has no other means to stay in Dhaka hiring a private flat (Interview, general student3, 04-11-2006).

Kabir (2002) has stated that, using the control of a hall, the student organisations could take extortion from the nearby business community. The newspapers of Bangladesh have published number of articles regarding this issue. A student leader told me that a dormitory works as a security place for the occupying student group (Interview, BCL leader2, 16-09-2006). After an armed clash at the campus, the Armed Cadres can hide the arms at the halls. Without controlling the halls, the student organisations face problem to maintain control over the university campus.

During the period of 1991 to 1996, BNP was in power but JCD did not capture all the dormitories rather three halls were controlled by the BCL. In 1996, even after taking the power of the country by AL, BCL did not take the control of all the dormitories. However, in 1998 BCL took the control of all the dormitories. In 2001, when BNP came to power again, JCD recaptured the dormitories from the grip of BCL. So it is seen in Dhaka University that the student group, generally linked with the ruling party, tends to control the dormitories to get different facilities. I will discuss the politics of student dormitories and its influence over quality in another section (Section 4.3.3. In this section, I aimed to discuss the culture of capturing both university campus and dormitories. The politics of dormitories will be discussed in section 4.3). In the following section, I will be discussing about the mechanism of controlling the campus and halls. In order to maintain control over the campus and dormitories, the students groups have developed the *culture of Cadres or Mustan*.

4.2.4 Culture of Cadres or Mustans and incidents of political violence

On 23rd April 1998, I was in a procession of BCL. The procession was passing the Business Faculty of Dhaka University and suddenly there started gun fighting. The cadres of JCD started to fire over our procession and the cadres of BCL also began to fire with

arms. Being scared, the students tried to flee away. One of the BCL leaders from our procession died as he was shot in his head. I entered inside of a room to save me. The gun-fight continued to about two hours. My exam was on following day and I was bound to participate at that procession. I could die on that day. Even to these days, when I remind the incident, I get scared. The cadres or Mustans generally use guns at the campus of Dhaka University.

This is not the experience of me only rather there are many such incidents happened at the campus of Dhaka University. Ahmad (2000) found that in order to capture and maintain control over the university campus as well as dormitories, a culture of *Armed Cadres or Mustans* had been developed in Dhaka University. Cadres are those who use muscles and machines (arms) against the opponent groups and in support of their own group. The cadres are called as *Mustan* in Bengali. Cadre (Mustan) is used as a same word of panic and fear. As control over the campus and dormitories provides many facilities, all the student organisations (for Dhaka University, mainly JCD and BCL) tends to take control. This caused the incidents of political violence between the groups. The most serious matter of violence is use of fire-arms that causes the death of many students. Besides the death of many students, political violence causes unexpected closing of the university and many students injured for this. Ahmad (2000) has provided the statistics of number of incidents of political violence, number of deaths and number of days the university was remained closed because of political violence in Dhaka University. I have collected some data regarding these issues. Table 1 delineates the statistics.

Table 1: Number of death, number of incident of political violence at the Dhaka University campus and days of closing for political violence by year

Year	Number of death by political violence	Number of incidents of political violence	Days of closing
1988/1989	3	2	23
1989/1990	2	5	55
1990/1991	1	3	37
1991/1992	7	No data available	No data available
1992/1993	4	No data available	4
1993/1994	1	84	15
1994/1995	4	104	16
1995/1996	1	126	8
1996/1997	1	85	22
1997/1998	1	72	7
1998/1999	0	No data available	19
2001	1	No data available	23
2002	0	No data available	67
2003	0	No data available	11
2004	1	No data available	41
2005	0	No data available	9
2006	0	No data available	40
2007 (up to 14 th January)	0	No data available	14

Source: Ahmad (2000) has provided the data from 1988/89 to 1998/1999. I have collected the data from 2001 to 2007 by myself from the newspapers. I faced problem to find out the number of incidents of political violence because the definitions of violence used by newspapers are not same. So I couldn't provide reliable number of political violence.

From the above table, we can see that 7 students died in the year 1991/1992. That was the first year of BNP government and that was also the first year of a democratic government after toppling military regime in Bangladesh. At that time, some halls were controlled by

JCD and some were controlled by the BCL. As a result, the cadres of both JCD and BCL were active in campus. In that year, both JCD and BCL were trying to take control over the Dhaka University campus and over the dormitories of the university. That might be a possible cause of such a big number of deaths. Number of incidents of political violence occurred higher in numbers in the years of 1993/1994, 1994/1995, 1995/1996 and 1996/96. The former two years were the last two years of BNP government while the later two years were the first two years of Awami League government. During 1993/1994 and 1994/1995, Awami League was demanding the early resignation of the government while BNP was ignoring the demand. The rivalry situation of the two parties reflected the student wings of both the parties. However, during the first two years of Awami League government (1993/1994 and 1994/1995), JCD was losing their control from the campus and BCL was taking control. As a result, number of incidents of political violence increased significantly than the other years.

In 2001, BNP returned to power as the party achieved more seats in the parliament election. I have tried to explore the number of deaths and days of closing during the BNP government through reviewing the newspapers. I found that two students were killed during the five years of BNP government from 2001 to 2006. Both the students were killed because of the internal clashes among the groups of same organisation. In 2001, a BCL leader was killed by the other members of BCL and in 2004 a JCD leader was killed by the other members of JCD. The university remained close for 23 days in 2001, 67 days in 2002, 11 days in 2003, 41 days in 2004, 9 days in 2005 and 40 days in 2006 for the political reason. The days of closing may be higher than what I have found. Here the important observation is the decrease of number of deaths. Only two students died in these five years. During these years, JCD established effective control over the campus and captured all the dormitories. As a result, BCL was near to absent from the campus. During the 1991 to 1996, JCD didn't capture all the dormitories rather some dormitories were controlled by the BCL. As both BCL and JCD were active in the campus, both tried to get facilities from the university. However, perhaps JCD learnt a lesson from the experience of that time. During the 2001 to 2006 years, JCD almost turned BCL out from the campus. As a result, JCD enjoyed absolute mastery over the campus and the number

of political death became less. The only thing BCL could do during that time was to call strike at the university. So number of days of closing of the university didn't decrease.

According to The Daily Bhorer Kagoz, Dhaka University remained close for 474 days during the 10 years from 1980 to 1989, 452 days during the years from 1990 to 1999 and the university was closed for 256 days from 2000 to 2005 (The Daily Bhorer Kagoz, 04-05-2007). From this data, we can see that the university faced unexpected closing for a total of 1182 days during last 25 years (from 1980 to 2005). On an average, the university faced 47.28 days closing each year. This data can help the readers to understand the extent of unexpected closing of Dhaka University. Siddiqui (1997), Ahmad (2000), Kabir (2002), Sayeed (2005) all found that political violence among the student groups was the main reason for such closing. The event of closing the university because of political violence influenced the quality of education in a negative way.

In the political incidents, the cadres play important role. Using the guns, they try to turn out the opponent groups. Sayeed (2005) has interviewed a cadre. He was more fortunate than his friend who died because of an internal clash among the cadres of their same organisation. Though he was alive, he had been slapped and hit by fourteen boys. They beat him up with the blunt end of hockey sticks. Sayeed (2005) has lamented the interview of the cadre as below,

I don't use to talk much with my family. I use to come home at night just to eat and sleep. There are no words spoken between me and my father.

"I still take drugs," continues the cadre. "I feel very frustrated. Now I regret everything. What have I done with my life? And for what? I could have done better in my exams. The whole family – cousins, aunts, uncles – have become aloof; they avoid me. They think I am a goon. And this causes enormous frustration. I start taking drugs whenever I get frustrated...."

"I can't sleep at night," says the cadre. "I have nightmares. Most of the time, I see people fighting. I don't want to rejoin the party. Now I realize what the party has done to my life. Now I want other boys not to get involved in politics, but I can't quite put it into words" (Sayeed 2005: 1).

By the above interview, we can easily understand the misfortune of a cadre of Bangladesh. Many cadres of Dhaka University have been murdered either by the opponent groups or by the members of same group. Many are still active on campus. However, evidence shows that the cadres face difficulties in the long run (Sayeed 2005).

I interviewed a cadre (Mustan) of Dhaka University. When he was active in politics, he practiced power widely in support of his organization. He always carried a pistol with him. In passage of time, he was shot by the opponent group. They passed six bullets in his body but he survived. When he was in hospital, he felt that his fellow politicians were not happy as he survived. As I asked him about why his organization members were not happy for his survival, he told me that if he was dead by the opponent group his organization could get an issue of movement. Realizing such an understanding, he decided to be away from the student politics. At present, he has left the dormitory and lives at a private house and does not go out because he is still afraid of the opponent group. He told that he joined with the student politics aiming to serve the country within a better means. He added that, his organization had used him only for its benefit. He had a strong complain regarding the use of the term ‘student politics’. He said,

In reality, this is not student politics at all. This is politics by the university wings of the political parties. Neither JCD nor BCL is dealing with the benefit of the students. Even they are not dealing with any nationally significant issue. They are only trying to serve their parties (Interview, Cadre, 01-11-2006).

In saying about his own experience, he said that he had done so many unexpected things for his group. He said,

When we were in opposition, my organization called strikes at the university for various reasons. Before the day of strike, there was a need to burst some bombs at the university campus. It helped to make the students frightened. I was responsible to contact the people who burst the bombs at the campus. I contacted the people and paid them for bombing. I have done this many times (Interview, Cadre, 01-11-2006).

He told that he has collected ransom from many persons for his organization. He thought that the top leaders of his mother party actually used them against the opponent party. Because of so many unexpected doings, he has become repentant. To state about his present situation, he told that he had thought so many times for suicide. He added that if he was not engaged with politics, he could place a better result and secure a bright future for him and for his mother. He said that he couldn't even go to visit his mother because all looked on him with a neglected looking.

A cadre of Dhaka University committed suicide on 26th July 2006 as the member of his organization disconnected all relationship with him (The Daily Star, 27-07-2006). When his party was in opposition, he used muscles and machines to establish the right of his party on campus. At that adverse situation, he secured a top post of his party. However, when his party returned to power, the student leaders turned him out from the committee. They even disconnected all relationship with him. He was arrested by the policemen. These incidents frustrated him and lead him to commit suicide. The cadre I interviewed was known to the dead cadre. He told this reason of his suicide to me while I was interviewing him (Interview, cadre, 01-11-2006).

Based on the above discussion, we can see that the armed cadres help the student organization to take control over the university campus and the halls. They also help to maintain the control. In return they face great difficulties in future. They face a risk all the time to be murdered. As the nearby people began to overlook them, they also began to neglect themselves. Some do suicide and some live a frustrated life. The role the cadres play for their organizations affects the quality of education of the university. At the same time, the result the cadres get in the long run is unexpected.

4.2.5 About the student leaders

In the earlier section, I have said that because of the absence of DUCSU election, there are no elected student leaders in Dhaka University who can represent the students. There are party-selected student leaders in the campus who lead the political activities of the respective groups. Surprisingly, most of the student leaders of both JCD and BCL are not even student. The present president of JCD got admitted in Dhaka University in 1985/86

session, 22 years ago and the secretary of that organisation got admitted in 1988/89 session, 18 years ago. Both of them have finished their student life long ago. However, they are still in student politics holding the top posts of one of the largest student organisations of Bangladesh. The president and secretary of JCD Dhaka University branch were admitted in Dhaka University in 1990/91 session and none of them are student of Dhaka University now. There is no age limit to be the leaders of JCD.

For BCL, the leaders are comparatively younger than the leaders of JCD. The president and secretary of BCL Central Committee got admitted in Dhaka University in 1995/96 and 1997/98 sessions respectively. The last council of BCL was held on 4th April, 2006 and at that council the Awami League leaders fixed the maximum age for the BCL leaders (The Daily Prothom-Alo, 05-04-2006). However, the Awami League leaders announced new committee of BCL Dhaka University branch following the new age bar but there was serious internal clash about the new committee. The present president and secretary of BCL Dhaka University branch were admitted in Dhaka University in 1998/99 session.

One noticeable phenomenon is that the student leaders continue their student life for many years to be the leaders. Sometimes because of their irregularity in academic activities, they lost their studentship. Nonetheless, they manage their studentship from the university. It has found that after finishing one course, a student leader is getting admitted in a new course. However, they try to be with the university by any means. A BCL leader made me clear about the issue.

When the student leaders lost their studentship due to irregularity in academic activities, they can manage it again. The authority of the university provides them facilities in this regard. Some teachers are engaged with party politics and there are both BNP-supported and AL-supported teachers. The politicised teachers play a vital role to continue the studentship of their fellow student leaders. The student leaders, linked with the ruling party get this facilities easily but the opposite student leaders do not face big problem. The leaders extend their studentship admitting new courses after finishing one course. Sometimes the leaders get admission in prestigious courses without fulfilling the minimum

criteria. The teachers help them in this regard. This culture is continuing in Dhaka University for year after year (Interview, BCL leader1, 10-10-2006).

From the statement of the BCL leader, it was understood that the teachers, who are engaged in party politics favour the student leaders of their chosen group to extend their studentship. However, the extension of student life also comes to an end and the leaders lost their studentship. However, the ending of studentship doesn't create any problem to be a student leader.

At the time of focus group discussion, the participants told me that they did not know any of the top student leaders of JCD and BCL. They informed me that they had no necessity to be known with the leaders (Focus group discussion1, 15-11-2006).

From the above discussion, it can be understood that the top leaders of JCD and BCL were engaged with their respective organisations as professional politicians. They did not emphasise on their academic degree or result. They try to get better positions in their respective organisations. These leaders were no or very few aware about the benefit of the students rather they try to be benefited from their parties.

4.2.6 Moral and ethical considerations of the student leaders

Different literatures have illustrated the moral and ethical values of the student leaders. Siddiqui (1997), Kabir (2002), Sayeed (2005) all have found that the student leaders of Dhaka University were engaged in taking extortion, robbery and sometimes ransom from different sources. Different newspapers have published many articles and news regarding this issue.

The JCD leaders claimed that the BCL leaders were engaged in taking tolls, extortion and ransom but they told that the JCD leaders were not engaged with such activities (Interviews, JCD leader1, 27-09-2006 and JCD leader2, 11-10-2006). The stand of the BCL leaders was just opposite of JCD leaders in this regard. They complained that the JCD leaders were engaged in taking ransom and extortion but the BCL leaders were never engaged with this (Interviews, BCL leader1, 10-10-2006 and BCL leader2, 16-09-

2006). However, the non-political students complained against both the BCL and JCD leaders for taking extortion. They told that some student leaders were engaged with taking extortion or tolls (Focus group discussion2, 15-11-2006).

Sayeed (2005) has stated an interview of a Mustan and he has acknowledged that he had taken extortion for many times for his organisation. I also interviewed a Mustan and he told me that his organisation took extortion from different people and organisations. He told me that he had the records of taking extortion of his fellow student politicians. He added that he had collected extortion for many times on behalf of the top leaders of his organisation (Interview, Cadre, 01-11-2006). The Mustan told me that the activities of taking extortion usually operated by using the influence of halls. Because, halls are safe places for the Mustans and armed cadres.

To state about the nature of student leaders, Kabir (2002) was very straight-forward. For him,

The campus nowadays appears to be held hostage by a minority of essentially apolitical, amoral, armed mercenaries. These commoditised student leaders tend to use the campus as a platform for their business activities and periodically engage in armed conflicts to occupy university halls of residence as an urban version of land-grabbing (Kabir 2002: 1).

The Daily Star published a report of robbery by a JCD activist at the campus. According to that report, a JCD activist of a hall snatched a necklace of a female student and tried to run away but the other students caught him. He was handed over to the police later (The Daily Star, 18-05-2004).

Besides the monetary dealings, there was other complains against the student leaders. Sayeed (2005) found that the student leaders were free to kill and free to rape. Kabir (2002) stated that

They [the student leaders] snatch tenders, they start getting contracts of construction, they start taking tolls on the plea of any trivial occasion. They take ransom, they insult the girls, disturb them in different ways. They get addicted and spoil their own and other lives. They kill each other for grading their own positions and they create an environment of animosity among their fellow students. They disturb the shopkeepers, businessmen, canteen owner and even the guests (Kabir 2002:1).

Sayeed (2005) has addressed the student leaders and activists as the most criminalised groups of Bangladesh.

This was not my objective to collect data regarding the moral and ethical values of the student leaders. However, talking with different respondents it seemed that the respondents hold a negative image of the student leaders regarding their moral and ethical values. The student leaders of both BCL and JCD claimed that their activities were aimed to the well-being of the students as well as of the university. If the student leaders are not ethically sound, how can they work for the betterment of university's education? A teacher raised this question and said, the student leaders of Dhaka University were not ethically sound so that their activities were not influencing the quality of education in a positive way (Interview, Teacher2, 05-11-2006).

4.2.7 Student political activities at the campus and teaching-learning

Because of the political violence, the university face unscheduled closing and I have discussed the issue in an earlier section (Section 4.2.4). However, when the university remains open, the academic activities are also disturbed by political activities. During the time of my data collection, once I found that there was a meeting of JCD in front of the Arts Faculty of Dhaka University. More than one loud-speaker was used in the meeting and the speaker was providing speech with a loud voice. As a result there was a high sound at that area. I was surprised to see that some classes were taking place only few yards away from the meeting place. No doubt, the classes were disturbed by the sound of the meeting. I attended the meeting and the speakers were providing speeches in support of BNP regarding the Care Taker Government. The JCD leaders were resuming harsh threat to the AL and BCL leaders (Observation of political meeting of JCD, 19-09-2006).

After the meeting they organised a procession and the procession travelled through the Faculty of Arts building. At that time, the participants were uttering slogans together with a loud voice and that also created high noise.

At the time of interviewing a JCD leader, I asked him about the issue of political programmes at the campus and the environment of teaching-learning. He told that the JCD activists and their political programmes did not make any problem for the students. He added that no one complained against them for disturbing. Moreover, he told that the BCL did procession at the corridors and moved in front of the classrooms even at the time of classes but JCD stopped that. He said, “We do not do procession at the corridors what BCL did at their time” (Interview, JCD leader1, 27-09-2006).

A BCL leader told me that, they could not organise any political programme at the campus of Dhaka University as JCD captured the campus. However, he also did not notice any problem by the political programmes for the academic activities (Interview, BCL leader1, 10-10-2006).

However, the comments of both JCD and BCL leaders were rejected by the general students. They informed me that they felt great problems due to the political programmes held at the campus during the university hours. At the same time they told me that they could not make any complaints against the student leaders because they were afraid that the student leaders could make problems for the complainants (Focus group discussion1, 11-11-2006; Focus group discussion2, 15-11-2006). The issue of disturbance of the academic activities by the political programmes has been reflected in many literatures. Siddiqui (1997), Ahmad (2000) and Kabir (2002) all found that the academic activities of Dhaka University were disturbed by the political programmes. The Vice Chancellor of Dhaka University acknowledged that the political programmes of student organisations were creating problem for academic activities of the university (Interview, Vice Chancellor, 16-11-2006).

Hence, in spite of the disagreement of the BCL and JCD leaders, it can be said that the political programmes of different student organisations were disturbing the academic environment of the university. I think that both the leaders of JCD and BCL were aware of the disturbance but they could not agree because they could hardly speak against their activities. Hence, the student political activities were playing adverse role for quality of education of Dhaka University.

4.2.8 Politics at Modhu's canteen: A culture of power practice

There is a canteen at the Dhaka University campus named Modhu's Canteen. There is a historical importance of this canteen. During the Pakistani Regime, the DUCSU leaders used this canteen as a meeting place and many important decisions were made through those meetings. The Pakistani Army killed the owner of the Canteen during the War of Independence in 1971. However, the culture of meeting of the student leaders is still in process. Important meetings of different student organisations take place at Modhu's Canteen. There is a huge gathering of student leaders, activists and general students at the campus everyday. I found that the top leaders of JCD were at the canteen and many activists surrounded them. They were talking about different issues of national politics and what would be the possible role of JCD for the forthcoming days was also part of their discussion. I found processions were coming one after another at the canteen (Observation, Political gathering, 23-09-2006). Almost everyday, the leaders of the halls come to Modhu's Canteen with processions.

Actually I myself have the experience of this type of procession. During my student life at Dhaka University, I stayed at a hall. First one year of my staying at the hall, JCD was controlling that hall. At that time, I took part in procession with the JCD leaders of my hall and uttered the slogans of JCD. However, after one year BCL took the control over my hall and then I joined the procession of BCL and used the slogans of BCL. For many times, I took part in those processions missing my important lectures because the hall leaders warned me that if I did not take part processions they would turn me out of the hall.

Though some female leaders were also at the canteen with other male leaders, I did not find any such procession from the female halls. At the time of focus group discussion, the female students informed that they did not take part in procession everyday (Focus group discussion1, 11-11-2006).

I talked with a student who accompanied a procession. He informed me that he had an important lecture that morning but he could not join the lecture. He told me that there was a competition among the leaders of different halls and according to that competition, the hall leaders were trying to make bigger procession than other halls. As a result, the hall leaders told them to join the procession regularly. He added that one of his friends had turned from the hall out as he refused to take part in procession everyday. He told that the hall leaders tried to show a large number of participants in procession to the top leaders. During the focus group discussion with the male students, all informed me that they had to take part in procession even missing classes (Focus group discussion2, 15-11-2006). Only the controlling political group can organise such procession from the halls. Two of the participants had experience to participate processions with both the BCL and JCD leaders as they had experienced the controlling age of both the groups. They informed me that there was no difference between the culture of this procession of JCD and BCL (Focus group discussion2, 15-11-2006).

Here it is clear that because of the political activities, some students are missing lectures. Besides, the students were facing mental pressure as they were dominated by the powerful student leaders. This is another way of influencing quality of education in a negative way.

4.2.9 Movement by the general students and student organisations

Historically the students of Dhaka University are very aware about their rights and claims and they agitate against the authority of the university. The role the students of Dhaka University played during the movement of independence is acknowledged by the people of Bangladesh (Hannan 2000). Even today, the students are very aware of their rights. If the university authority takes any anti-student decision, the students protest against that. While I was discussing with the general students of Dhaka University, they told that they

were aware about their demands. As an example, a student of the Business Faculty of Dhaka University told that the teachers of their departments decided to introduce an MBA course at the evening which would be operated following the *rules of private university*⁷. The students thought that this decision would be harmful for the students. Because, according to the decision, the teachers will provide more lectures and they will be tired and quality of lectures will deteriorate. On the other hand, more number of students will use the same library and other facilities. The officers should also be busy with more students. Thinking all these, they protested the decision. BCL tried to be engaged with the movement but the general students were capable to make the authority understand to leave the decision (Interview, general student2, 05-11-2006).

The general students told that the pro-government student group does not tolerate any movement against the university or against the government while the opposition groups tried to develop more and more movements in the university (Focus group discussion2, 15-11-2006). A teacher also told that the pro-government student organisation generally opposed the movements of non-political students. He remembered one of the movements of general students. He told me that during the AL Regime, a female student of Dhaka University complained that she had been raped by a teacher of Dhaka University. The general students demanded punishment of that teacher. As the teacher was AL-supported, BCL took stance in support of the teacher. BCL attacked the rally of general students and the movement ended without any result (Interview, Teacher3, 18-11-2006). Hannan (2000) told that the students and teachers were deeply hurt by the role of BCL.

The general students told that each of the time the pro-government student organisation protested the movement of the students (Focus group discussion2, 15-11-2006). In providing an example, a student told that the students of their hall tried to agitate against the hall authority for continuous electricity supply at the hall. However, the JCD leaders of the hall resumed a harsh threat to the students who took part in the movement. The movement ended without any result (Interview, general student4, 10-11-2006).

⁷ Generally the private universities take more money from the students. Moreover, there is no high competition to be admitted in private universities rather economical ability is a big issue.

I asked a JCD leader of that hall about the issue of that movement. He said,

If the students of my hall agitate, the news will be published in the newspapers and the people will know that the government has failed to supply electricity to the students of Dhaka University. Besides, the opposite parties will give statement and they will try to make it as an issue of anti-government movement. As a result, my party will face problem. I was instructed by the senior leaders of my party that there would be no movement at my hall. Problems would be solved through discussing with us. If the students claim to us about their demands, we will place that to the hall authority (Interview, JCD leader2, 11-10-2006).

Here the JCD leader acknowledged that they tried to stop the voices of general students. I talked with a BCL leader and asked him about the claim of JCD that the BCL members always tried to find out issues for movement. He said that, it was their duty to look after the benefits of the students. He added that the senior leaders of his party had instructed to develop movement against the government (Interview, BCL leader2, 16-09-2006). Due to my request, he tried to make the issue clearer to me,

As JCD does not allow any movement by BCL, the BCL members try to move with the general students. However, there is a risk all the time that JCD could attack the protestors. The general students do not take any risk to be attacked but the BCL members are not afraid to be attacked. Because, if JCD attacks BCL, the people will blame JCD and that will be good for BCL. As a result, people of my party instructed us to continue movement with the help of the general students. When JCD was in opposite group, the members of JCD played the same role (Interview, BCL leader2, 16-09-2006).

Through the above examples and statements of JCD and BCL leader, we can see that the student organisations have assigned duties from their respective parties. One group tries to strengthen the movement while the other group tries to stop the movement but none of them try to keep the benefit of the students. The student organisations try to keep the benefits of their parties. For the parties they even attack over the procession of the non-political students. In earlier section, I have discussed about how the pro-government

student organisation benefits from the university (Section 4.2.2). Both JCD and BCL try to be pro-government organisation all the time. The general students blamed the role of both JCD and BCL (Focus group discussion², 15-11-2006). So we can see that the student organisations have destroyed the ability and courage of the general students to agitate against the university authority.

4.3 student politics at the dormitories of Dhaka University

In the earlier section (Section 4.2.3), I have discussed about why the pro-student organisation generally capture the dormitories of Dhaka University and how the organisation benefits from the halls. In this section, I will be discussing about the nature of hall politics and the influence of that politics on quality of education.

4.3.1 Dormitories of Dhaka University: recruitment ground in politics

The student organisations of Dhaka University use the halls as recruiting ground in politics (Kabir 2002). The number of seats is inadequate comparable to the demand. As a result, the occupying group provides seats to the students who support their organisations. This is a common phenomenon in Dhaka University. I asked a student about how the students of halls become engaged with the politics (Interview, general student⁴, 10-11-2006). The student was staying at a hall for five years. He tried to explain the process. The students, who are from outside Dhaka need a seat at the dormitory. They usually contact the familiar (either by same region or relative) students of Dhaka University and through the familiar students they contact the leaders of halls he attached⁸. The leaders then take an interview of the student about his political background. Then they asked the new students to take part in all the political programmes of that particular organisation. The new student does that sincerely and tries to show his active presence in the political programmes. After some days, the leaders permit him to stay in a *mass-room*⁹. I have visited a mass-room where some 22 students were living. The situation of that room was not congenial to live or study. They were leading a miserable life there. Besides, the

⁸ All the students of Dhaka University are attached with halls and all the administrative and academic dealings like admission, residential facilities, tuition, results etc. are maintained by the respective halls.

⁹ There are some rooms in all the male halls where there are no chairs or tables or other furniture. There are only some beds on the floor where the students sleep in row at night. Some 20 or more students sleep in a room though there is a provision for four students to stay in a room.

leaders lead comparatively comfortable life and there are no extra students in their rooms. Then a student shifts to a normal room when a student leaves the hall and the seat comes to empty. The students told me that in more than 90% cases, two students share a seat. According to that provision, some eight students live in a room instead of four students and in a two-seated room four students live. In such a situation, two students need to share a chair and a table. Because of the inadequate space at the reading room, all the students cannot use that. However, the students face problem to continue their studies. *The inadequacy of physical facilities* influences the quality of education to a great extent (Focus group discussion2, 15-11-2006).

4.3.2 Facilities received by the student leaders of dormitories

Some of the new students of the dormitories become interested to politics. A student, who was engaged in politics at the beginning but at present far from politics, told me that the political leaders and activists enjoy some extra facilities than others (Interview, general student3, 04-11-2006). For example, the political leaders and activists sometime take meal from the canteen without providing money. The caterer of the canteen cannot complain against them. If the caterer tries to complain, he would lose the right of his business. The new leaders also get some monetary facilities from the senior leaders. My respondent told his own experience in this regard.

Once a senior leader told me to make a banner for our organisation and he provided me 1000 Taka for that. I used 450 Taka to make the banner but the senior leader told me to keep the rest of the money to me. That money helped me a lot as my parents couldn't provide me enough money. Besides that, the senior leaders provided me money now and then (Interview, general student3, 04-11-2006)).

In this way the senior leaders provide some monetary facilities to the new leaders and activists. There was another benefit the new leaders enjoyed and that was the non-political students cared about the new leaders. My respondent told me that when he was in politics, the non-political students obeyed him to a large extent as he could use the power of his organisation against others. It provided him tremendous pleasure. By these ways the new students recruited as the political activists and leaders.

I asked him about the ideology of the student organisations. He told that he was in politics of JCD for two years but none of the leaders told him about the ideology of JCD or BNP. He informed me that he never found the constitution of JCD or BNP. According to him, the present politics of student organisations was operated towards the benefit of the individual students. So nobody cared about the ideology of the organisation or party.

A teacher of Dhaka University explained the phenomenon clearly. He told,

Most of the students of Dhaka University are from middle class or lower middle class family. They face many limitations in their daily life. When member of such a family gets some power and freedom, they try to enjoy that. They enjoy it though they know that this is unethical. This actually happens for the new student leaders of Dhaka University (Interview, Teacher3, 18-11-2006).

I attempted to explore the benefits the senior leaders received because that information can be helpful to understand the motive of student leaders behind engaging in politics. In answer of my question, a JCD leader of a hall told me that the party provided money to them to maintain the hall. He told that he did not get any money from other sources. Though he was reluctant to say, he acknowledged that the government favoured the student leaders to get jobs. He told that this was done by both the BNP and AL government. For him, without these facilities, the students would not be curious about JCD or BCL (Interview, JCD leader2, 11-10-2006). He also told that BCL members received the same facilities when AL was in power.

4.3.3 Dormitory politics and a question of quality of education

In this section, I will reflect on how student political culture of dormitories influences the education of the tenants.

The halls are the centres of student political activities of Dhaka University. Once there was provision of election for the hall unions and the leaders of the hall unions were elected by the students. As there is no DUCSU election, the election of hall union is also absent. At present, the leaders, generally the leaders of pro-government student organisation, control and lead the halls.

In interviewing with the tenants of a hall, I became known about the culture of hall politics. A student told that the hall leaders misbehaved with the general students. He gave an example.

I stayed in a room and a leader was also in that room. One night the leader was gossiping with some of his friends with loud voice. Till midnight I could not sleep. Then I requested him not to make high sound as I was trying to sleep. Then the leader physically assaulted me and turned me out from that room. After that, I lost the right to stay in that room (Interview, general student2, 05-11-2006).

I was surprised to know that all the respondents of the hall experienced misbehaviour of the hall leaders. I was interested to explore the reason. A Masters' level student, who have experience to stay at that hall for six years told me that, the problem began regarding the participation of different political activities. He added that the hall leaders called them to take part in procession whenever they liked. He said,

Say I need to attend an important lecture and I am putting on dress to go to campus. At that moment, the leaders of the hall come and order me to take part in procession. Then what to do? If I deny them, then they can insult me or physically assault me (Interview, general student4, 10-11-2006).

From the above statement we can find that the hall leaders emphasise more on political activities than the academic activities of the tenants. Another student told me that the issue of harassment happened with some silly matters. He added that once I did not give *salam* (say greetings following the culture of muslims) to a leader and he resumed a harsh threat (Interview, general student1, 04-11-2006). He informed that at that moment he could not notice the leader as he was tired with lectures. From the focus group discussion I realised the helplessness of the students (Focus group discussion2, 15-11-2006). A participant of the focus group discussion told that if he could maintain the expenses of a private house he would leave the hall. He again said that sometimes the behaviour of the hall leaders becomes intolerable. All the participants of focus group discussion informed their bitter experience about how they faced problem from the leaders (Focus group

discussion2, 15-11-2006). The hall leaders arranged political programmes even at night and the students had to take part in those political programmes. The students expressed deep frustration regarding the political activities of the hall. They demanded banning of student politics forever from the university.

The students were very vocal about the moral erosion of the student leaders. For them, some leaders were engaged with robbery, some took extortion from the nearby business community. A student told that some of the leaders were addicted in drugs and others supported them (Focus group discussion2, 15-11-2006). A respondent told that a leader was good in behaviour but that leader did not place any post in the hall committee. For him the good qualities of the leaders were not appreciated by the authority of the student organisations (Interview, general student1, 04-11-2006).

The students informed that there was serious scarcity of seats in the dormitories of the university. For them, this was a big problem for even study. Many of them had no chairs or tables in their rooms. The reading room of the dormitory was not spacious enough for the students. For the students, they could study at the university library but the library remained close after 9.00pm. Besides, many students do part time job and they have only scope to study at night. As a result they needed congenial reading facilities at the dormitories (Focus group discussion2, 15-11-2006). The tenants were happy with the dining system of the hall. The mess was operated by the students and satisfactory food was provided through mess.

I asked a leader of that hall about complain of the students. The leader acknowledged some of the complains of the students. For him, it was not that serious. Then he said, unless we practice power, the students would not take part in political activities. He added that, as the students were staying in the hall, they needed to take part in political activities (Interview, JCD leader2, 11-10-2006).

The supervisor of the hall told that he was also informed about the problem created by the student leaders. He added that none of the students made any complaints. If they

complained, the hall authority could take action (Interview, Dormitory Supervisor, 03-11-2006).

I asked the students about whether any of them complained against the leaders for creating problem. They were surprised with this question. A student told that, if he complained, he would be turned out from the dormitory. None of the students wanted to take the risk (Interview, general student1, 04-11-2006).

Based on the above discussion, it can be realised that the students of the halls were disturbed by the leaders of the hall. They faced disturbance from two sides simultaneously – by the student leaders and because of the lack of physical facilities. For them, many students of that hall did not have even chairs, tables or other required furniture. They could only sleep on the floor. They students told that the hall leaders had little or no headache to solve this problem. The hall politics seemed to influence the quality of education in a negative direction.

4.4 Teacher politics: A helping ground of the student politics

On 8th February 2007, transparency International Bangladesh organized a round-table conference regarding the *problems of higher education of Bangladesh*. Eminent educationists were present as discussants. The Daily Star published the news of the conference on 9th February 2007. One of the professors of a public university presented findings of a research in that conference he conducted on *Corruption in Public Universities of Bangladesh*. He explored that the ongoing appointment procedure of Vice Chancellors, Pro Vice Chancellors and teachers should be changed. According to the present system, there is a provision of election for appointing Vice Chancellor and Pro Vice Chancellor. For that research, this provision encourages the teachers to be engaged in party politics because to be elected in various posts, the candidates need the support of other teachers. If a Vice Chancellor elected with the votes of the teachers, he cannot take any required steps about the teachers. The other discussants also blamed the open party politics by the teachers in the university affairs. They opined that the culture of party politics at the university campuses had divided the teachers in groups and that was

creating a big problem for the university. They demanded the ban of party politics by the teachers at the university premises (The Daily Star, 09-02-2007).

While I was collecting data for my study, I found that there was a close relationship between student politics and teacher politics. There is a complaint that in many cases the teachers are recruited in Dhaka University based on political believe and the politically recruited teachers continue their political activities even after they are recruited as teachers.

4.4.1 Teacher recruitment in Dhaka University: A job opportunity for the student leaders

One of the professors of Dhaka University has claimed that instead of recruiting teachers in Dhaka University the authority was recruiting party people as voters. He added that most of the newly recruited teachers were not academically sound to be teacher of Dhaka University (The Prothom-Alo, 09-02-2007). Many literatures have claimed that the teachers were recruited based on political believe (Siddiqui 1997; Hannan 2000).

At the time of my fieldwork, recruitment process was in action in an institute of Dhaka University. The authority declared vacancies of four posts of lecturers. Of the candidates, six had strong political support behind them. I took the opportunity to find out about the procedure of recruitment. I interviewed the administrative officer of the institute. He told me,

Six candidates have strong political links. One candidate is the son of an influential teacher of the university. The Chief Secretary of BNP is supporting a candidate while another candidate has a good connection with the top JCD leaders. A candidate is preferred by an influential teacher of the institute and others have also good political connection. This is very difficult to say what will happen in the final stage (Interview, Administrative Officer, 15-10-2006).

At the corridor of the institute, I met a candidate for the posts of the lecturers. I talked with her. She told that she had come to meet the director and some teachers of the institute (Interview, former student1, 15-10-2006). She thought that she would be

selected as she had the educational and political background. She told that she did not like the procedure of political recruitment but as the system was in process she was using political connections.

At the day of recruitment, the authority appointed all the six candidates and to do so they created two new posts of lecturers on *ad hoc* basis. When I talked with the administrative officer again, he told me that the authority had done it to prevent any unexpected situation because all the candidates were politically strong (Re-interview, Administrative Officer, 02-11-2006). He added that as this was the last year of BNP government and the government wanted to keep everyone happy because support from everyone was needed to be won in the upcoming parliament election.

A professor of Dhaka University who acted as a member of selection board for many times clarified the issue of political influence over recruitment of teacher in Dhaka University.

Recruiting a disqualified candidate as a teacher based on only political influence is the most destructive activity for a university among all the negative sides of student politics. If you appoint an inefficient teacher, the students will suffer for year after year. For many times, many students will think what an inefficient teacher s/he is! But according to the rules of Dhaka University, there is no provision to fire any inefficient teacher. So, for a long time (35 years or more), the nation will suffer by that teacher. If this continues, there will be a stagnation regarding knowledge and intellectual abilities of the nation. Unfortunately, this is happening in the public universities of Bangladesh including Dhaka University. I was a member of Selection Board for many times but I could not stop the political recruitment. This is still in vogue (Interview, Teacher1, 13-11-2006).

To tell about an example of political recruitment, he told that during the previous appointment, Rebeka (not the real name) had good results and relevant experience comparable to the other candidates but she was not selected. He added that he had supported Rebeka because of her excellent results and experience but Selection Board

appointed another student who had a comparatively poor academic ability but had strong political connection with the ruling party.

Being informed by that professor, I contacted Rebeka and talked with her. She told,

I had a dream to become a teacher of Dhaka University from my childhood. As I did the best result at the honors and Masters level, I thought that my dream might come true. The circular of teacher recruitment published in my Institute and I applied for the post. At the Selection Board, the Chairman asked me some stupid questions which were out of my imagination. I realized that the chairman was favoring a particular candidate. I was not selected by the Selection Board and surprisingly found that a candidate with a mediocre result and excellent political connection was appointed as a teacher. I was very disappointed with this system of teacher recruitment in such a university like Dhaka. If this culture of teacher recruitment continues, the glory of Dhaka University would be demolished soon (Interview, former student2, 22-10-2006).

From the above example, we can see that the political leaders and activists appoint as teachers of Dhaka University. This appointment is not for the betterment of university's education rather this is for the student organisations.

A JCD leader told that the teachers were recruited based on merit not by political connection. However, he told that during the AL Regime the BCL members were recruited as teachers. I told him that many people complained about the political recruitment of the JCD members as teachers of Dhaka University. He said, if a political leader had the quality then why he could not be recruiting as teacher (Interview, JCD leader1, 27-09-2006).

However, another JCD leader told me that the present authority of Dhaka University is favoring the JCD leaders and activists for appointing as the teacher of Dhaka University. He told that BNP, the mother party of JCD, had assured them to help in appointing as teachers of the university. The leaders again told that if BNP did not provide such facilities to JCD leaders and activists, why the students would be with JCD (Interview, JCD leader2, 11-10-2006).

In talking with me about this issue, a BCL leader told that about 300 teachers had been recruited in Dhaka University on the basis of political believe during the last five years of BNP government. He told that during the AL period, teachers were recruited based on merit only not on political believe (Interview, BCL leader1, 10-10-2006).

It was very interesting that both the BCL and JCD leaders were complaining against each other regarding political recruitment of teachers. Dhaka University experienced movement against the political recruitment of the teachers.

All the student organizations but JCD observed strike in Dhaka University against the recruitment of a student leader as teacher (The Daily Star, 11-09-2003). Such movement took place for many times in Dhaka University but the system did not change.

The Daily Bhorer Kagoz has reported that 300 teachers have been recruited during the last five years of BNP (The Daily Bhorer Jagoz, 04-05-2007). This is an AL-supporting newspaper and the number of teacher might not be fully true but the issue of political recruitment in Dhaka University is an outspoken issue in Bangladesh. Though the BCL and JCD leaders tried to complain against each other regarding the political recruitment in Dhaka University, it seemed to be true for each of the parties. A general student told that the brilliant students were becoming frustrated regarding the political recruitment of teachers. He addressed the post of teachers of Dhaka University as the job ground for the political leaders and activists of student organizations (Interview, general student2, 05-11-2006).

4.4.2 Teacher recruitment: behind the scene

A student told me that the teachers helped their chosen students to be appointed as teachers. I requested him to make the issue clear to me. He told,

The politically biased teachers try to appoint more teachers who support the same party. Say a BNP supported teacher intended to appoint another teacher who will also support BNP after joining as a teacher. For that purpose, the teacher targets one or two students supporting his party.

Then a personal relationship develops between the teacher and the student(s). The teacher then transmits the issue to the other teachers (of same political believe) of the department. The teachers help that student(s) to place better result even providing more numbers in the exams. At this period the student(s) also try to help the teachers. At the time of recruitment, the student(s) face little or no problem to be recruited (Interview, general student2, 05-11-2006).

I was surprised to hear the process. I talked with an administrative officer on an institute of Dhaka University. He acknowledged the issue and told that he had some records about how the teachers provided more marks to the politically active students (Interview, administrative officer, 15-10-2006). The other students tried to protest against that but they could not do anything because the student leaders who were benefited stopped the general students. He added that this system was an explored issue and the students were also informed about that. As a result, some students tried to follow that process from the beginning of their university life.

The officer again told that some teachers, mainly senior teachers, appoint his chosen student as part-time teacher and sometimes it happens only to create a pathway to appoint the part-time teacher as permanent. Through this process, a political teacher adds with the senior political teachers. After appointing as teacher, the new teachers engage with political activities actively for their own benefit. To get the residential and other facilities, the new teachers try to be active in politics.

A BCL leader told me that some roles played by the teachers, influence the students to be engaged with student organisations. As I was curious to know about details he told,

When a general student goes to the Departmental Chairman, Dean or Provosts for solving an academic problem, they do not care about the problem of that student. Then the student tries his best to get the attention of respective Chairman, Dean or Provost. Nonetheless, in many cases they did not succeed. Then the student contacts a student leader to help him. The student leaders actually wait for such problems. Then the leader goes to the respective teachers (Chairman, Dean or Provost) and most of the cases the problem solves within a short time. By this way,

the general student became engaged with the student organizations of that student leader (Interview, BCL leader1, 10-10-2006).

The leader told me that without the politicized teachers, the student politics could not spread out to a large extent. After forming a new government, the government changes the top administration of Dhaka University. Vice Chancellor, Pro Vice Chancellor, Proctor and Provosts are appointed from the same party. He added that after any political violence, a probe committee formed and the probe report never came out. Siddiqui (1997) has found that inquiries were instituted routinely but not even one report had seen the light of the day. Here we can see that the inquiry committee is formed by the politically active teachers and they were not interested to provide any report. The political teachers might try to hide the misdoing of the pro-government student organization. This might be a possible benefit of appointing political Vice Chancellor and other top administrators in Dhaka University. I have discussed in earlier section that with the help of the teachers, the student leaders continued their studentship year after year ignoring the rules of the university.

By helping the student organisation, the teachers get many facilities from both this mother party as well as from the respective student organisation. The Daily Prothom-Alo has published an article by a senior professor of Dhaka University. The Professor has written about the dark side of teacher and student politics. For him,

The politically active teachers [of Dhaka University] are not serious in their academic responsibilities. They become engaged with many activities outside the university. Ignoring the students of their main workplace, they become engaged with other private universities. Some teachers are engaged with more than one private university simultaneously. Sometimes they do it violating the rules of Dhaka University. As a result, the main students of Dhaka University face a big problem. As the private universities provide lots of money, they are interested to those than Dhaka University. If the Dean tries to take any action against the teacher, the respective student organization helps the teacher so that no action can be taken against him. To prevent this system, the connection between national politics and student and teacher politics should be cut immediately (The Daily Prothom-Alo, 08-05-2007).

Engagement of the teachers of Dhaka University with the private universities is an explored issue in Bangladesh. As a result of over emphasizing on private universities, the students of Dhaka University are in trouble. Based on the above discussion it can be found that the teachers are appreciating the recruitment of more political teachers even by taking unethical ways. Providing more marks to the chosen and political students cannot be appreciated. Being responsible to provide a meaningful probe report, the teachers do not do that. Complain of preferring the private universities than Dhaka University is quite unexpected. However, I have found these were in action. This culture does not match for a healthy environment for ensuring quality education. All the students should get same facilities from the teachers and all the students will be vocal against the misdoing of the teachers. This is actually not happening in Dhaka University. So, it can be understood that there is bondage between student politics and teacher politics of Dhaka University and one is helping the other but both seemed to be decreasing the quality of education.

4.5 Summary of the findings

A big distrust was found between BCL and JCD. Each of them took the opposite stand of another. Though the leaders of both JCD and BCL claimed that they were trying to maintain a congenial teaching-learning environment for the students of Dhaka University, their activities did not help their claims. The political parties are the main beneficiaries of student political activities of Dhaka University.

Dhaka University faces unscheduled closing of on an average 47 days per year. No doubt this influences the quality of education in a negative direction.

Even in the normal university days, the political organizations organize different political activities like political meeting, procession, demonstration etc. These activities take place near the classrooms and the classes are disturbed. This also creates problem for ensuring quality of education.

The general students even cannot do any movement regarding the academic issues because of the protest of the pro-government student organization. The pro-government

student organization does not like any movement at the campus. This is not an expected culture for the university.

The culture of armed cadre or Mustan is used for getting immoral facilities like capturing the campus and dormitories, taking extortion or making other groups weak. The Mustans create problems for the students in one hand and they destroy their own lives on another. This culture is causing a big problem for a sound campus.

Through the comments of the respondents, it is explored that there is a political bias in recruiting teachers in Dhaka University. These politically-biased teachers are influencing the bad culture of student politics providing them many illegal facilities. In return, they are also getting facilities from the student organizations. However, the role of such teachers and student organizations are decreasing the quality of education.

The system of appointing Vice Chancellor, pro Vice Chancellor and other top administrators is highly influenced by the ruling party. As a result, creating the expected system of education in Dhaka University is facing problem.

The students, live in dormitories suffer by the student leaders. Sometimes they become bound to take part in political activities. From the data it is understood that the students of the dormitories face problem by the political activities which influence their education in a negative way.

5 Chapter Five: Discussion and Conclusion

In this concluding chapter, I would like to discuss some important dimensions of this study. At the beginning of this chapter, I have attempted to discuss the important characteristics of student political activities based on the experience of student politics of other countries. I think this will allow the readers to understand the student political activities of Dhaka University in respect of the perspectives of other countries. Then I tried to discuss how the findings of this study confirm or differ with other studies or literature and why. Some policy recommendations also have been provided in concluding section of this chapter.

5.1 Trend and scope of student politics

Student political activism does not follow any well-accepted process rather there are quite considerable differences in student political activism among countries, regions and by historical periods. The most dramatic difference at present is between the industrialised nations and the countries of South (Altbach 1984). The underlying question which the researchers take into account in researching about student politics is why, given the supposed purpose of the university as an institution for the search of research, teaching and learning does it so frequently become the focus of ‘oppositional’ political activity (Burawoy 1976). Altbach (1984) has reflected the view of authoritarians which considers student politics as a negative factor – something to be eliminated from academic life. Though student politics sometimes affects higher education and in some cases sweep beyond the campus to have a greater influence on the political system (Altbach 1984), it is not enough to condemn student politics as a negative force. Instead, it is necessary to understand the forces that push student activities and to evaluate the result of the activities. If we look at the past of the student politics, we can see that it had contributed the process of nation building and political socialization. Specially in the countries of the South, students were a more constant force (Altbach 1989) and contributed to social change and greater impact (Altbach 1984).

However, evidence shows that students of Industrialised Countries are also active in politics with different issues and contributes to the national politics. The first ever recorded history of student politics was about German students who are from an Industrialised country. The German students involved in politics with the *Nationalism* sentiment in 1848 (Altbach 1989). After the 1848 incident, the German students continued their feelings of Nationalism and contributed again in nineteenth century. Students were active in politics throughout the 1950s and specially 1960s with different national and educational issues. Besides the national and international issues, the students of Germany were conscious about the academic issues also (Altbach 1989; Karl 1970). The post Second World War German has got the service of their students which helped German to be as the country is now (Levitt 1989).

Like Germany, the example of student politics has found to a large extent in its neighboring country France. For Fields (1989), the French students exerted political pressure in order to assume greater control over the structure on French Higher Education and the welfare of students within that structure as well as they exerted political pressure in response to extra-educational political issues such as colonialism and domestic authoritarianism. In 1954, the French students supported the Algerians who were in independence was against France. In spite of the unhappiness of the government, the French students did not change their attitude.

In 1986, the French president introduced new laws for education. By the laws, the rights of the students were narrowed to a large extent. As expected, the students began movement demanding the withdrawn of the laws. With the course of the movement, a young Arab demonstrator died as he was beaten by the policemen. After this, the situation went out of the control of the government and the laws were withdrawn immediately without any condition. Thus, the French Student Movement achieved another victory (Fields 1989).

Historically the American students were not that active in politics like Asian, African or European students (Altbach 1989). Nonetheless, the American students became

politically active in the sixties with Free Speech Movement and Anti Vietnam War Movement (Buhle 1989). Free Speech Movement (1964) at the University of Berkeley, California is considered as the first prominent student movement in the USA. The University authority was reluctant to allow political activities by the students at the university campus. The students began to move against the university authority. In verge of the movement, the authority permitted the political activities at the campus (Buhle 1989).

Though the Free Speech Movement was an issue of the students, the Anti Vietnam War movement by the American students was against the nature of grabbing other countries. Along with the students of different countries, the American students protested the war by the USA. Though the students couldn't stop the war, the anti-war role played by the American students was a prominent incident in the history of student movement of the USA (Altbach 1989).

In the 1960s and 1970s, student politics was considered extremely important by policy-makers, media, and social scientists. The students of Latin America qualified as the most over-studied political factor of the 1960s (Levy 1989 and 1981). Among the Latin American countries, Argentina, Chile, Peru, Colombia, Mexico, Venezuela and Cuba particularly influenced by student politics (Levy 1989).

Argentina has a long history of student politics during the beginning of the nineteenth century. In 1918, the Argentine students moved and that was called as *University Reform Movement*. Starting from the Cordoba University, the movement spread out to the other universities of Argentina (Mollis 1989).

Among the Asian countries, student politics influenced the national politics as well as academic matters in many countries like Thailand, South Korea, Iran, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Burma, Turkey etc. Being developing countries in most of the cases, countries of Asia have influenced to a greater extent by student politics than the countries of developed countries (Altbach 1989). Within the Asian countries, Indonesia had a long

history of student politics from the colonial period. The Indonesian students contributed significantly to gain independence of Indonesia (Altbach 1989) and toppled the regime of President Sukarno in 1967 (Bachtiar 1989).

The Indonesian students played a vital role to develop the newly independent country. The leaders offered the students in military uniform to choose to remain in the military as a regular army, navy or air force or to return to civilian life by continuing their formal education on a government fellowship, within Indonesia or abroad. Another special and rare service was paid to the newly independent Indonesia by their student community. There was a serious lacking of teachers in the Indonesian Educational Institutions. To meet this situation, the students started to mobilize students who were willing to serve as temporary teachers in the different schools. By this initiative, many university students were mobilized to serve in the secondary schools (Bachtiar 1989).

Based on the above discussion, the below-stated characteristics of student political activities can be identified.

- Regardless of the regions and countries, the students are very fond of Nationalism.
- The students are very protesting against grabbing the land of other countries. Students of discussed countries, including the American students, protested against the Vietnam War by America.
- Students of different countries struggled against military rule.
- Consciousness about the academic issues is another important phenomenon of student politics.
- Student political movement is generally a sporadic activity by the students and organised based on certain issues. After achieving success of the movement, the students return to their academic activities.

In light of the above discussion, I would like to discuss about the findings if the present study.

5.2 Some dimensions of the present study

Though students of Bangladesh have contributed significantly in different national as well as academic movements, many have claimed that the present political activities of students are not contributing towards ensuring quality of education in the universities. There is no active student union in Dhaka University. The political activities are lead by essentially amoral, apolitical and armed mercenaries (Kabir 2002). By law, the student organizations are operating as the wings of political parties. The student organizations are financed and controlled by the national political parties (Siddiqui 1997). This is very rare in other countries that the student organizations act as the wings of political parties. Sometimes, student organizations supplement the political parties in national movements and this has been found in Germany, Indonesia and France, but none of the countries the student organizations became the wings of political parties. Siddiqui (1997) has provided a possible reason of being the student organisations as the wings of political parties. He said that the political leaders of Bangladesh were not happy with the sporadic role of the students. In independent Bangladesh, the political leaders tried to get the continuous service from the students and that was why the political parties made the student organisations as the wing of political parties (Siddiqui 1997).

Number of incidents of political violence has caused unexpected death of many young politicians in Dhaka University. The dormitories of Dhaka University are commonly known as the “Mini Cantonment” because of storing illegal arms there by the political leaders, activists and Mustans. With all these, student politics of Dhaka University is now spreading panic and fear to the people (Kabir 2002). As a result of these incidents of political violence, the university faces unscheduled closing which lacks the contact hours between the teachers and students (Ahmad 2000).

Altbach (1989) has stated that the students of different countries agitate regarding international, national and academic issues. Students of Dhaka University also contributed in different international, national and academic movements. However, at present the student organizations of Dhaka University are in movement regarding the political issues of the political parties. So question can be raised that how can it be

evident to use the students in support of the political parties? This is an important issue that needs to be thought by the political leaders of Bangladesh as well as the university authority.

Historically student politics is sporadic. When problem creates, the students agitate spontaneously. After solving the problem, the students return to their normal academic life (Altbach 1989). However, in Dhaka University, there is a culture of permanent political activities by the student organizations. This is because the student organizations are in movement with the issue of their mother parties. As Bangladesh remains politically instable for most of the time (Riaz 2004), there is no scarcity of issues for movement. The continuous movement better matches with professional politicians rather than students. Because of continuous political activities by the student organizations, the student leaders and activists use time in political activities which lacks their academic time. This may have an effect on quality of education of the student leaders and activists. A study can be conducted to explore the academic achievement of the student leaders and activists comparable to the non-political students.

The Dhaka University Central Students' Union (DUCSU) was established in 1922-23 session and DUCSU continued its normal activities up to 1990. During the decade of 1960s, the student movements were operated with the leadership of DUCSU leaders and one important criteria of student politics was the involvement of brilliant students to politics (Kabir 2002). Many DUCSU leaders have emerged as national leaders of today's Bangladesh. However, it is surprising that even to the military regime in 1980s, DUCSU continued normal footstep but after starting of democratic age from 1990, there is not even single DUCSU election. The absence of active DUCSU is a big problem for creating the expected culture of student politics in Dhaka University.

The present party-linked student organizations are financed by the respective political parties. It can easily be understood that the political parties are investing money for the student organizations and the parties will try to get more than their investment. The leaders of student organisations are selected by the parties, the activities and decisions are

determined by the party leaders. In such a situation, the activities of the student organisations are really controlled and operated by of their mother parties.

The student organizations are operated by the leaders who are not even students. Though Awami League has made a rule of *age limit for becoming the leaders of BCL*, the rule yet to be applied accordingly. However, JCD has no such rule. The present president and secretary of JCD central committee admitted in Dhaka University before 22 years and 18 years respectively and none of them are present student. Sometimes the leaders extend their studentship year after year for sake of being leaders of student organisations. This culture is as like as professional politicians. A former president of Bangladesh and Chancellor of Dhaka University, once in a convocation speech opined that student politics was the most profitable business for the student leaders (The Daily Prothom-Alo, 30-11-1998). In his speech the president illustrated how the student leaders earned power, property and status even in their student lives without being involved in any job or business. This culture of student politics doesn't match with a fare student political culture.

The current student politics has created serious distrust among the student leaders and activists. This has not only happened between the two opponent parties rather leaders of same organisation sometimes do not believe each other. A student leader provided an example that a leader of his party murdered the another leader in order to get a top post in the committee (Interview, BCL leader2, 16-09-2006). This is a big dimension of student politics of Dhaka University.

The findings I got regarding the Mustan culture was really very shocking. Why do the student leaders continuing this culture? This study explored that the leaders (both student and national) were using the Mustans in their own support. The Mustans face very shocking result in the long run. They either die or injure seriously and live frustrated lives. They not only create problem for other students, they also destroy their lives. This culture cannot be supported anymore.

The dormitories are found as the hunting ground for the student leaders. The general students claimed that the student leaders used the dormitories as their private houses. The students of the dormitories lost many rights. They are bound to join the meetings, rallies and other political programmes due to the instruction of the student leaders. If any one disobeys the student leaders he faces problem. The leaders can physically assault him or turn him out from the dormitory. This culture disturbs the students to a large extent.

There is a serious lacking of accommodation facility of the students at the dormitories. The seats of the dormitories are very short comparable to the need. In that situation, the leaders manage seats for the students and in return they demand involvement with their organisations. Adequate accommodation facilities should be created in dormitories and dormitory situation will be friendly for the tenants.

This study explored that the teachers are recruited in Dhaka University based on political obedience rather than academic qualities. Sometimes the student leaders are recruiting as teachers with the help of their mother parties. Both JCD and BCL leaders complained against each other regarding political recruitment of teachers. However, the general students complained against both the JCD and BCL leaders for joining as teachers bypassing the qualified candidates. After joining as teachers, the student leaders begin their new part of politics in support of their mother parties. A new government always appoints Vice Chancellor, pro-Vice Chancellor and other top administrators of Dhaka University from their chosen teachers and staffs. As a result, political recruitment becomes easy. The respondents expressed their frustration regarding this culture. Appointments of Vice Chancellor, pro-Vice Chancellor, teachers and other staffs will be free from political biasness. So the ongoing recruitment system will be changed.

The politically active teachers behave as a helping hand for student politicians. The teachers including Vice chancellor, pro-Vice Chancellor and other teachers help the student politicians in many ways, even violating the university rules. The student leaders continue studentship with the patronage of teachers. Besides, after political violence probe committees are formed but the committees never submit probe report. This actually

helps the student leaders. Many have complained about the commitment of politically active teachers.

5.3 About the methodology and data

Data for this study were collected mainly through fieldwork. At the time of field work, the student political situation of Dhaka University was very hot. The student organizations were in movement with the issue of the Care Taker Government – which was entirely an out of educational issue. As a result of that situation, I couldn't interview all the interviewees I planned earlier. I choose another sample for interview.

Though I planned to interview some of the political leaders of BNP and AL, I left the decision because of the unavailability of the political leaders. As the political situation was hot, the leaders were very busy. Interview with the political leaders might improve the findings of this study.

I have used Hannan (2000) many times as reference. This is because Dr. Mohammad Hannan has documented the history of student political activities of Bangladesh from 1830 to 1999. He is an eminent researcher on student politics and obtained his doctoral degree on student politics of Bangladesh. He has written the history of student political activities of Bangladesh in ten parts. As a result, books by Hannan are widely used in this study.

5.4 Concern about theory

In my study, I did not follow any recognized theory. I was willing to use relevant theory for my study. Though there were some theories partly relevant with the present study, I could not follow any of them. Actually to the best of my knowledge I could not find any theory relevant to discuss the issue of student politics and quality of education. My knowledge about this issue also did not allow me to formulate any new theory.

At first I tried to use *parts and whole* theory by which I could explain how part/parts of a system influence(s) the whole. Considering the university system as *whole* and teachers, students etc. as *parts*, I could explain how student political activities of Dhaka University influence the whole system. However, I left this thinking because student politics is not a single part of Dhaka University rather this is related with almost every parts of Dhaka University. On the other hand, quality of education is not the whole thing of Dhaka University. During the pre-independence period, student politics of Dhaka University was an issue of proud for the nation and the students supplemented the national leaders in various national movements (Kabir 2002). However, at present student organizations have become the parts of the political parties and the activities of student organizations are controlled by the respective mother parties. So I thought that part and whole theory would not be relevant for this study.

I thought to use structural functionalism theory for this study but I left the thinking because student politics of Dhaka University no longer a sub-system rather this is actually controlling the whole system. So following the structural functionalism theory, I could not explain the issue properly.

I also tried to follow the power theory. This study explored that there was a culture of power practice by the political parties and student organizations at Dhaka University. The quality is influenced by this culture of power practice. This theory is about the political parties. To the best of my knowledge no one used this theory to explain the student political activities. However, from this study it explored that the student political activities of Dhaka University were different in many ways from other countries. The people of Bangladesh have a soft corner to student politics in one hand and the present activities are not supported by the students and teachers on the other. Though the present student politics is contributing towards many unexpected issues, students should have the right to agitate with their rights and demands. So power theory could guide me towards a narrower dimension to explain the student political activities.

There was another reason for not following any prevailing theory for this study. The present Care Taker Government of Bangladesh is planning to ban *party-linked student politics* as well as *party-linked teacher politics* from the educational institutions of Bangladesh. The government is claiming that all the students and teachers are free to join any political parties but they will not be allowed to form any political organizations in the educational institutions. The students and teachers are allowed to agitate at the campuses with any academic issue. They are also welcomed to agitate about nationally significant issues. However, the teachers and students will not be allowed to organize political programmes (of the political parties) at the campuses. This is a hot issue for Bangladesh now. Political leaders, teachers, educationists are writing so many articles almost everyday supporting or protesting the decision of the government. The government has already formed a committee to formulate guidelines in this regard. In such a situation, realizing the importance of the issue of my study, I tried to explore the influence of student political activities on quality of education being free from the guidance of any theory. I was hesitant to influence my study with a theory which was not properly relevant with my study. If I could do that, I could mislead the people of my country through the findings of my study.

I have a plan to conduct further study on this issue. As I am working as an educational researcher in BRAC (Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee, a leading Non-government Developmental Organization of Bangladesh), I will get the opportunity to conduct further study on this issue. Considering the present study as hypothetical study, further studies on this issue, may allow me to find or formulate a theory appropriate with the issue of student political activities and quality of education.

5.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, I want to say that though students have contributed in many national and academic movements of Bangladesh, the present political party-linked student politics of Dhaka University is going on sacrificing the quality of education. The Dhaka University authority and political leaders of Bangladesh should take this issue seriously. This study

explored some issues that can be taken into account. Further study regarding student politics of Dhaka University and quality of education can contribute new knowledge to find out the steps that should be helpful to solve the problem.

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Annex 1: Code of the respondents

Respondents	Description	code
Teachers	Teacher of The Institute of Education And Research	Teacher1
	Teacher of Political Science Department	Teacher2
	Teacher of Sociology Department	Tecaher3
JCD leaders	Leader of Central Committee of JCD	JCD Leader1
	JCD leader of a dormitory	JCD leader2
BCL leaders	Leader of Central Committee of BCL	BCL Leader1
	BCL leader, who lead a dormitory once	BCL leader2
Former students	Tried to became a teacher of Dhaka University with both academic results and political connection	Former student1
	In spite of better qualifications, failed to become a teacher of Dhaka University	Former student2
General students	Second year student	Student1
	Assaulted by a student leader	Students2
	Engaged with politics earlier	Student3
	Student of Master level	Student4
Focus group discussion	With female students	Focus group discussion1
	With male students	Focus group discussion2